

THE BIBLE AS PSYCHE:  
DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL  
TRANSLATION OF SCRIPTURE FOR CONTEMPLATIVE CARE AND  
REFLECTION IN CHAPLAINCY

By

MORGAN STEBBINS

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## ABSTRACT

### THE BIBLE AS PSYCHE: DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSLATION OF SCRIPTURE FOR CONTEMPLATIVE CARE AND REFLECTION IN CHAPLAINCY

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As a core faculty member of the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care and an adjunct at the New York Theological Seminary, I train chaplains from diverse theological backgrounds, including many who now follow a Buddhist tradition. Although these chaplains typically have some biblical tradition in their backgrounds, they lack a working appreciation of biblical content, themes, and methodology. This can create a gap in ministry as many patients that chaplains attend to have a living biblical orientation. Not only that, but the hermeneutic tasks involved in textual understanding are similar to the tasks involved in therapeutic listening. I surveyed a group of chaplains about the need for a set of tools with which to deeply engage both biblical text and the patients for whom this text is foundational. The results favored the development of an approach that would not contradict a reader's personal theology and yet would allow strong therapeutic engagement with someone who is biblically oriented.

The difficulty of the task lies in the attempt to be at once both hermeneutically aware and therapeutically effective. This is an account of the psychological and hermeneutic background, development and usage of a particular approach, embodied in the phrase psychological translation, and its application to the Bible. Included as well are the results of feedback surveys and vignettes which show the degree of relevance of this approach as well as areas for future improvement.

For Jennifer, my co-explorer



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No work of any worth springs to the mind free of deep debt to all those who have explored this terrain beforehand, and this one is no different. I have to deeply thank my mentor and long-time supervisor Yoram Kaufmann, who passed away in 2009, for his truly inestimable inspiration as well as the precision of his method in the clarification of a most beautiful area of Jung's vast corpus. I must also thank Koshin Paley Ellison, a man who I am fortunate to count as a friend and colleague and without whom this would not have been possible. Also vital to the development of this project were the members of my class, *The Bible as Psyche: The Logic and Transformation of the Soul in the West*. So, many thanks for enthusiasm and commitment to: Ben Korta, Charles Krupo, Diana Lakis, James Morgan, Kim Rasmussen, Dojun O'Connor, Mary-Anne O'Sullivan, Jo Ann Share, Ilana Storace, and Margaret Yard.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING .....	1
CHAPTER 2 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS .....	6
CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION .....	16
CHAPTER 4 HISTORICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD SCRIPTURE: IS A NEW APPROACH NEEDED? .....	22
CHAPTER 5 FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS PROJECT .....	50
CHAPTER 6 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE, ANTHROPOLOGY AND NEUROLOGY .....	68
CHAPTER 7 JUNG’S MULTIPLE USE OF THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION .....	92
CHAPTER 8 THE TRANSLATIONAL TOOLS .....	107
CHAPTER 9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT: CLASS, USAGE, REFLECTION .....	133
CHAPTER 10 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES.....	176
CHAPTER 11 RESULTS FROM SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE AND FEEDBACK .	180
APPENDICES .....	189
APPENDIX A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL .....	190
APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRES.....	260
APPENDIX C VERBATIM UNEDITED CLASS NOTES: .....	263
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	317

## Table of Figures

Figure 1 Pascal Boyer, “Religious thought and behavior as by-products of brain function.” Trends in Cognitive Sciences 7 (2003):119.....	71
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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

This work is based in New York City, giving it unique opportunities as well as particular challenges. There could hardly be a more polysemic environment in which to practice practical hermeneutics. We are confronted—both challenged and encouraged—by an expectation of multiple languages, ethnicities, gender orientations, textual and literacy stances, religious orientations and personal needs. This shifting *mélange* is the norm, a norm anchored by the needs of particular chaplains to understand a particular text (the Bible) in order to have a personal encounter, to be able to relate to other's personal encounters and to practice reading in a particular way that allows interactions with others to be informed by textual considerations.

This project grew out of a particular need in a specific place and time and yet ended up being a somewhat hard-to-classify combination of Western general and biblical hermeneutics, Buddhist ethics in action, Jungian technical methods, and hospital chaplaincy. Whether it is seen as a Frankenstein monster or a tasty multi-disciplinary gumbo remains to be determined by the reader. However, this approach may be of some general use, as the question of cross-cultural understanding that is textually based, psychologically mature, and practically oriented is one that could be of broad relevance.

The organizational context for this project is the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care.<sup>1</sup> This practicing Zen community has both traditional and non-

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<sup>1</sup>Hereafter referred to by the abbreviation NYZCCC.

traditional features, but Zen has had a long history of community action and involvement, based on the image of the founding figure of Buddhism. Twenty-five hundred years ago, the historical Buddha established a practice to address suffering, old age, sickness and death. This practice included both personal and community solutions. In this tradition, Koshin Paley Ellison and Robert Chodo Campbell, Zen Buddhist priests & chaplains, established the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care in 2006 in the heart of New York City.

As leaders in the Buddhist chaplaincy field, the Zen Center is creatively transforming pastoral care by being both the first and only Buddhist organization to offer a fully-accredited ACPE CPE Buddhist chaplaincy training program in America. The Zen Center is also unique in that it integrates Buddhist contemplative practices into professional training, creating a dynamic program that is interfaith and experience-based, geared toward developing both professionals and those seeking to deepen their spiritual, caregiving practice.

Our senior chaplains, our chaplaincy students, and contemplative care volunteers are trained caregivers who provide direct care to the sick, the dying, and the suffering. Beth Israel Medical Center, one of New York City's largest hospitals, has integrated the Zen Center's group of clinical pastoral education chaplain interns and our contemplative care volunteers into its Integrative Medicine department, where we work directly with those in need. The Center also provides contemplative care volunteers to organizations such as Visiting Nurse Service of New York's hospice, with one-year placements at its local residencies as well as in individual patients' homes. The Center's staff chaplains

also volunteer with outreach programs at the Continuum Center for Health and Healing and similar care-giving organizations.

From professional one-day training sessions at The New York Open Center to extended retreats at Garrison Institute, the Zen Center's programs attract hundreds of participants every year. Refining caregiving skills, stress reduction, meditation development, contemplative practices, deep inquiry, spiritual care, and open dialogue champion our program goals.

The Zen Center manifests its mission of treating those who are suffering with the wisdom, compassion, and equanimity of the Buddhist teachings. Some statistics pertaining to service from the [zencare.org](http://zencare.org) website are as follows:

Since August 2007:

- 43,478 individuals received contemplative care in the face of death, cancer, AIDS, and other illnesses
- 15,681 family members, couples and friends received contemplative care as they dealt with grief, mourning and loss
- 30,299 hours of compassionate care have been given by our volunteer chaplains
- 11,784 staff people in hospitals, hospices, and prisons received spiritual care, including doctors, nurses, social workers and officers
- 3,094 contemplative care and meditation groups were run by our volunteer chaplains, with over 10,903 people attending.
- 5,315 men and women from the general public have received education in topics such as death and dying, Buddhist approaches to death, addictions and spirituality, and contemplative practices.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This information is from the NYZCCC website, found at [zencare.org](http://zencare.org).

My role has been multifaceted. I serve as an advisor to some of the students in both the chaplaincy and MAPCC programs; I am on the design team for the academic structure of the program; I am a co-teacher for retreats; and I am one of the core faculty. This project is primarily an outgrowth of the latter role, although it has relevance for all of them.

As the faculty member primarily responsible for the cross-cultural and ecumenical education of the chaplains, I am also the one most likely to be teaching a non-Buddhist course. I strive to present my students with a broad range of hermeneutic tools that work not only in academic settings, but that can be usefully applied when contemplating worship and dealing with meaning-of-life situations that constantly challenge them.

The issue that appeared out of this setting was the following. Buddhist chaplains in New York are very rarely attending to a sufferer who would claim even a remotely similar spiritual or religious tradition, in that most hospital patients are not Buddhist, and the ones who are tend to be from another culture, language, and type of Buddhism altogether. While teaching a class to another group of chaplains on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* it became apparent to me that many of them lacked general hermeneutic skills. This deficit combined with the lack of an appreciation of the deep themes of biblical faith traditions meant that both would need to be addressed. These two kinds of understanding, linked with a psychological perspective that would not be destructive to living faith could be helpful, since many of the patients in New York hospitals come from an overt and currently practiced or at least personally historical biblical orientation.

Since any cross-cultural study risks the problem faced by the whole field of anthropology in coming from the outside, a relevant approach would have to maintain a

balance between personal experience, wonderment about ancient text, and openness to current patient-based dialogue.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS**

As a core faculty member of the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care and an adjunct at NYTS, I am engaged in the training of chaplains from diverse (often Buddhist) theological backgrounds. These chaplains need a set of tools with which to deeply engage both biblical text and the patients for whom this text is foundational to spiritual understanding. For this project, I will develop and distribute a set of tools, and test these tools' usefulness in the field.

Embedded in the text and traditions of both Jesus and the Buddha is the question of how to integrate spiritual practice with action in the world. Almost any reading of the texts indicates that for both, this action necessitates efforts to create a more just and compassionate society. One of the ways this goal has been pursued in the last century has been the practice of hospital and hospice-based chaplaincy. The training of chaplains is focused both on developing the person of the chaplain as well as her or his skills in listening, understanding, and compassionate contemplative care.

However, as a faculty member at the Zen Center, I have heard about and seen a discrepancy between text and practice, both within the chaplains themselves and also between the chaplains and their patients. Many of the chaplains are practicing Buddhists, and yet almost all of them have a background in an Abrahamic faith to a greater or lesser degree. The great majority of the patients share this background. What has been missing



is the means to engage with biblical text in a way that is at once meaningful, modern, transformational, contemplative, and compassionate.

This project proposes using the tools of depth psychology to uncover levels of personal engagement and meaning in biblical texts without necessitating a particular theological stance or membership in a tradition of faith. In looking at this as a topic choice, the site team and I tried to narrow down the many and varied academic needs of the chaplains to a set of tools that was manageable while still addressing the most pressing needs.

This project has a relative urgency—for some chaplains, these tools are needed immediately, while for others the pull was not as great. Also it seems to me that although inter-faith dialogue in general is a developing field, the acquisition of these kinds of tools and modes of thinking is timeless. I remember a time in my own seminary training when a Baptist friend of mine confided that his own pastor had urged him to avoid seminary training on the grounds that he would lose his faith. I asked him if that had happened and he said, “Yes! But now I feel that I actually understand the scripture in a deeper way, so it is growing back from a stronger root.” In a way this is my goal with this project: to challenge the chaplains to use all of their intellectual and emotional resources to engage the text and allow them to come away changed.

I do not feel that there is a problem that requires systematic change (at least not within the scope of this project—I could think of lots of other types of systematic changes that I’d be very glad to see). Part of this thinking emerges from the question of resources available. Within the structure of the Zen Center and the site team are both the

opportunity and the encouragement to teach the chaplains as well as the context in which to test the outcome of the project.

My expectations of the project and its usefulness are varied. The outcome will depend in large part on my ability to develop clear and useful tools and then to communicate them. Unfortunately the understanding of these tools entails a fairly developed hermeneutic stance, so this will need to be communicated as well. Another variable is the interest and ability of the chaplains to use these methods, as well as the perceived relevance to their own patient population. These factors will be at least partly measured by the initial survey.

The chaplains' interest and investment are likely to be quite high, given what I already know of their commitment to their own contemplative practices as well as patient care. I have no idea how to assure personal satisfaction in either of these areas but certainly the ongoing relevance of the project will be determined by those very factors.

There are hidden pitfalls in the practice of any helping profession. At the forefront are the layers of motivation to put oneself in the formal position of helper. During my stint as director of training of a psychoanalytic institute,<sup>3</sup> I have discerned three usual motivations for assuming this role—and, importantly the title that goes along with it. After all, there are many ways to help, but only some of them allow one to don the mantle of helper. Although a lengthy discussion must be deferred, I have given the three arenas of motivation self-consciously psychodynamic names: voyeurism, masochism and the power-complex. Experientially, these refer to the erstwhile helpers' lack of vibrant internal life, denial of their own potential, and perceived lack of impact. To be brief, the

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<sup>3</sup> Jungian Psychoanalytic Association, New York, 2006-2012.

first describes someone who may listen carefully to another's problems because they are more interesting than one's own spiritual progression. The second, denial, is masochistic, because there are always shadow elements that surround altruism.<sup>4</sup> The power complex is grounded in the unassailable social standing and moral dominance of the so-called helper. If these problematic tendencies can be honestly wrestled with, they tend to play less of a hidden role in the pastoral encounter.

In his book *Power and the Helping Professions*, Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig outlines some of the other, more subtle, arenas of power differential and usage in any psychologically oriented encounter.<sup>5</sup> The author traces various aspects of the ministerial, social work, and mental health professions to their roots, many of which are overtly or covertly coercive of the person in the patient role. His argument is that the position of expert or healer or doctor initiates a dyad in which the identified patient is pressured into maintaining the role of the therapist as the "well one." This leads to a self-blaming dynamic even in situations where the therapist has made a mistake or being in some way non-expert. Add to this the tremendous projection on any member of the clergy and the vulnerable position of the patient, and there is ample opportunity for misunderstanding, and even harm.

One of the solutions is to insist on the maturity, development, and insight of the practitioner. However this in itself presents problems. First of all, it merely transposes the

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology* (New York: Vintage, 1995), 265. "In fact, reciprocal altruism and social hierarchy may together be responsible for most of the dishonesty in our species..." This discussion within evolutionary anthropology (and psychology) must be grappled with as it directly addresses a number of misuses of power in the ministerial fields.

<sup>5</sup> Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig, *Power and the Helping Professions* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1971).

same power-dynamics to the supervisors of the chaplains. Perhaps more cogently, there is almost never sufficient time or resources to develop an adequate training environment for the chaplains over and above their technical and academic requirements. Furthermore this would have to address the very difficult question of what constitutes psychological maturity in the first place.

The problematic aspect of the helper/helped dyad typically comes about innocently enough. By assuming the role of helper, especially in the clergy, the chaplain becomes a target for a set of assumptions by the patient. Specifically, the chaplain is an expert in spiritual matters (which we will link however loosely with an internal life) as well as a person of integrity, authority, and impact. In the psychological jargon, this misplacement of attribution by dint of role is called projection. Without getting into the psychological aspect of it, it can be a useful field of co-arising if the chaplain is acutely aware of his or her own position with regard to the assumptions of the patient, and as long as the chaplain does not take it personally. We will come back to this delicate matter below.

This project begins with a broad general assumption that all great cultural artifacts are true documents of the human psyche. As we look at the study and practice of this relationship between artifact and psyche, it will be necessary to explain what is meant by the word “true” as well as the relevance of the concept of psyche. Goals for this method, for the chaplains, include general cultural competency, personal insight, and, more subtly, the development of a way of understanding what other people say and do that tries to appreciate the many levels of experience and expression that are typical of the chaplaincy setting. The chaplaincy setting could be generalized as any situation where people are

driven by difficult circumstance to think about what is vitally important in life, and in which they would talk about it with someone who assumes a certain role. It has been often said – and is a cornerstone of Buddhist theology – that serious inquiry often happens in a confrontation with sickness or death.<sup>6</sup> In the Buddhist tradition, it began historically with the Buddha's chance confrontation with a sick person, an old person, and then a dead person. This spurred him to leave his life as a prince, to leave his wife and child, and to go out and plumb the question of human suffering.<sup>7</sup>

Our entry point this process is the great cultural artifact: the Bible. We can begin by noting that the Bible is the world's best-selling book and could be considered the textual foundation of the Western world. This foundational aspect has been examined from viewpoints as varied as theology, economics, politics, and reductive psychologies.<sup>8</sup>

This project will take a different stance. While the roots of our approach go back to the beginning of formal hermeneutics, it will also make use of recent evolutionary and anthropological findings. If these influences can be taken together along with the best approaches of symbolic psychology, then we could call this stance that of depth psychology. As such, it claims that the Bible contains the structure and dynamics of our personal and social transformational experiences. In fact, one of the essential hypotheses of this approach is that texts become collective icons for the very reason that they express unconscious structure in the best possible way (that is, until superseded by another

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<sup>6</sup> David Kinsley, *Health, Healing and Religion* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 16ff. (and many other sources).

<sup>8</sup> This point hardly seems worth citing, but the difficulty of maintaining a psychologically relevant and non-reductive stance is worth noting. This does not replace but supplements the other more socially accepted explanations while also seeing them as psychological in nature.

symbol system). It will be our task to read the text in a way that illuminates that underlying structure and dynamics, and then to apply those findings to ourselves and our patients. This is an exacting discipline that involves a bracketing of traditional theological, political, social, and economic understandings while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of the text.

In our attempt at a new kind of understanding,<sup>9</sup> we will try to adhere to a specific sort of exegesis. We will let the Greek root of the word exegesis, translated as *to lead out* or *to draw out*, guide our way through the text. The anthropological aspect of this approach questions traditional interpretation as often being no more than justifications of community standards (and is therefore the opposite of exegesis, the word for which is *eisegesis* or “reading in”). On the other hand we do not assert that this approach attains any full liberation from the hermeneutic circle.

After describing our theoretical starting point, and then outlining the derivation of a new set of translational tools, we will delve into some of the central narratives from the Bible—both the Old Testament<sup>10</sup> and the New Testament. We will compare traditional theological readings, including mystical and heretical understandings, with our developing psychological method. In this project the goal is twofold: first, to understand the biblical roots of ourselves, our culture, and our patients in a deeper and more compassionate manner; and second to learn to understand any person’s psyche, regardless

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that the stated goal has been attempted many times and is in any complete sense impossible. The only hope of the author is that this approach adds another tool to the chaplains’ hermeneutic toolbox.

<sup>10</sup> I have, in the past, referred to the Christian Old Testament by its Jewish name, as the *Tanakh* or The Hebrew Bible. However in the context of the dominant interpretive American schema (that is, of Christianity) it is clearer to refer to it as the Old Testament and then explore the various mis-attributions of messianic prophecy in light of first century Jewish thinking – in this way we can also see the mis-attributions as symbolic moves in themselves.

of cultural background, in a fresher, less biased manner. This understanding is a large part of what I consider to be compassion.

What is a traditional Bible study? This question can only be skimmed here. Typically it leans toward one of two constraints which parallel the two constraints or poles that we find in studying religion in general. One is the academic, using the historical/literary model, along with archeology and language study, to develop theories and explanations in synch with academic norms. The other, as mentioned above, is generated from within a particular community of belief, in which case the text is used as a spiritual inspiration and usually a justification of that community. In this project, the text is seen as something else entirely. Of course it might be fairly said that we are propagating our own community. I say to that: So be it —we now at least understand our bias. One of the unique things about this community of chaplains is that we study the great texts in order to understand others and perhaps help others understand themselves. That means that there is little impetus (nor means) to recruit those people we attend to. This allows a little space between a group that must have an internal coherence (in the anthropological sense) and one that is measured more personally in terms of outcomes.

We will use all of the tools mentioned above and then another, which we will call by a number of names – partly to describe a somewhat moving and difficult target and partly in order to avoid becoming attached to a particular name or aspect of this view. It can be called the symbolic method, it can be called psychological translation, or we can use the description that Yoram Kaufmann coined, which is that we are *finding the orient*. He describes the process as a bit like an exercise in translation but applied to overall

meaning. The best description of this is Kaufmann's *Way of Image*,<sup>11</sup> although it is also discussed quite thoroughly in C. G. Jung's, *Children's Dreams*.<sup>12</sup> The basic idea is not too different from watching a movie or hearing a story. That is, we can ask about the narrative and emotional high point. To put it another way, if we were taking the narrative as psychologically determinative, what is the most important aspect of it? This is a question full of other convoluted questions, and yet it is the (first part of the) goal. Part of the answer will depend on how we determine the question of importance. After that process we can ask how the "matter of importance" relates to us —that's what we will call grounding.

One of the guiding sets of proposals we will incorporate comes from Carl Jung. For Jung, the Bible, in its treatment of this image of God was the exposition of the most important thing to everyone (in the sense of ultimate concern) and an outline of the psyche of the Western person.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the principles, which we will come back to in more detail, are as follows. Different theological approaches to the text and different theologies altogether are seen as different, valid, psychological structures that imply a particular attitude towards the psyche as well as the text and its authority in different arenas of life. No one theology is authoritative (including this very method), although the heterodox can be compared to the orthodox in ways that parallel individual and collective tensions within an individual.

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<sup>11</sup> Yoram Kaufmann, *The Way of the Image, The Orientational Approach to the Psyche* (New York: Zahav Books, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> C. G. Jung, *Children's Dreams, Notes from the Seminar Given in 1936-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, vol. 11 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).



The same approach applies to versions of the text. Use is made of all scholarly tools in the pursuit of textual understanding, including criticisms based on the historical, form, genre, and redaction approaches. Textual changes themselves, however, including translation differences and errors, are seen as “motivated” by an unconscious need to reformulate the psychic image.

There are many different kinds of readers of the text, and many things that “reading” a text can mean. For our purposes the primary differentiation is between the chaplain as reader (that is, reading for one’s-self) and the other as reader. For the former, the goal is twofold: to develop a deep personal interaction with the text and to learn how to read or hear any communication as something essentially symbolically true. The latter means that one sees it as based in a particular context and that it operates on many levels. The essential aspect of the latter is to see all of the levels as valid expressions of meaning – although not all are internally consistent – which is an important therapeutic intervention. However in the case of the other as reader the goal is like the second personal approach to the text but applied to a person: one strives to understand and extend the other’s understanding of the text.

## **CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Goals and Strategies**

The first goal in this project was to see if the idea was relevant to the community of chaplains. That meant finding a way to develop some awareness of the need for a non-traditional biblical orientation. The first task, then, was to develop and administer a survey of the chaplains. This survey would be a beginning in understanding both the scope of the interest and perhaps some of the specific needs as well. The analysis at this level was expected to be fairly straightforward and given that many of the chaplains were known to me (no doubt diminishing some of the objectivity of the survey); the response rate expected was high, perhaps as high as ninety percent.

The next goal was to recruit a number of chaplains and chaplains-in-training. A minimum of ten or twelve seemed important to the validity of the outcome. After recruitment the task would be to determine the minimum requirements and the level of interest in the project, and then to teach the translational and reflective tools.

The third goal was to develop and refine a set of tools for translation and reflection. This would entail a review of tools currently available and, it was assumed, the development of a set of new tools that combined the needs of this group with my commitment to attempt to develop a methodology both hermeneutically sound and practically useful, one that would be psychologically sophisticated yet experientially direct, and one that was not based on the hermeneutic of suspicion yet had some claim to a critical stance. Finally, it had to allow greater therapeutic effectiveness or it would not

meet even a minimum set of criteria. The evaluation of this would be from the site team as well as the chaplaincy students themselves.

The fourth goal would be to actualize the above and teach the tools to the student-chaplains for use in the field. This was envisioned in a class format of fourteen weeks. It would be monitored by classroom interaction, weekly reflection papers and personal interviews. The evaluation would take the form of comparing the initial and final questionnaires and interviews in order to determine next steps as well as to understand the efficacy of the translational and contemplative tools in practice.

### **Results of First Questionnaire**

In order to begin exploring the interest in and usefulness of developing a rigorous and somewhat unusual hermeneutic and therapeutic approach, I developed and sent out a questionnaire, “Assessment of Need for Bible Tools in Chaplaincy.”<sup>14</sup> The target audience was a group of chaplains from the Zen Center corps who are also in the NYTS master’s program.

The total number of chaplains was relatively small and somewhat known to me at the start of this project, so some of the goals mentioned above section became somewhat conflated – that is the chaplains were apprised of the course content and given the questionnaires in the same time period. Still, the results of the feedback are informative, particularly in the areas of project relevance and patient population.

The questions ranged across four general areas that would be important for program design and execution. I wanted to quantify the chaplain’s patient load, to estimate the relevance of the project for the chaplains, to estimate the relevance for the

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<sup>14</sup> A copy of this questionnaire is found in Appendix B. It was administered online through surveymonkey.com.

patients and to leave a section for suggestions. The response rate was a surprising one hundred percent, probably driven by the small number (11 total) and the fact that we are all part of an integral community.

The results are as follows. In terms of patient workload, the chaplains worked an average of fifteen to twenty hours a week, clinically engaging with approximately two hundred and sixty people during that time period. I estimate that over the fourteen week time period of the course, approximately thirty-five hundred patient-visits will have occurred. It is my assumption that a gradual assimilation will take place with regard to the general attitude presented by the material of the project, including knowledge of scripture, comfort with biblical language, themes of the narrative, and psychological understanding of text, as well as personal change and the capacity for clinical application. Due to the large size of the cognitive task placed on the chaplains, I would also assume that it would not be until the second half of the course that the approach of the project would become relevant in the chaplains' work. The various feedback mechanisms will allow a reasonably accurate evaluation of these assumptions since the number of visits within the purview of the study is quite large.

The next question read as follows, "How important would you say that a religious, spiritual or other meaning-based approach is in your practice of chaplaincy or care-giving?" This question can be cross-referenced with the burgeoning field of spiritual best-practice in hospital chaplaincy in general and oncology in particular. The response was one hundred percent "highly important." Although this is certainly a general question that preaches to the choir, it nevertheless provides a baseline attitude.

Next was a determination of past and present religious affiliation. The results indicated a pretty tight grouping of Catholic and Protestant variations (eight responses, three Catholic or combination Catholic-Protestant and five Protestant) and three Jewish including a response of “secular Jewish.”

The results of the question about current practice indicated that all engage in some form of contemplative practice: Buddhist, Buddhist-realist, Zen, Zen Buddhist, Soto Zen Buddhist,<sup>15</sup> humanist-Buddhist, meditation, and Jewish-Buddhist. This grouping shouldn’t be a surprise given that the training is within the auspices of the Zen Center. However, this group of students does emphasize the need for both personal and clinical understanding of the text, since they all have an experience of two different faith traditions in two different contexts.

The next question assessed the chaplain’s sense of how helpful a greater biblical understanding might be to the patients already under their care. About a third of respondents indicated that this study would be helpful to 25-50% of the patients they saw, a third to 50-75%, and a third to 75-100%.<sup>16</sup>

All of the respondents indicated that this study would be helpful to their own understanding. The question was put in this way, “How helpful would it be to have a way to understand the biblical text and themes from a depth psychological perspective?” Depth psychology was explained as a kind of understanding of the human mind that has a therapeutic goal, that is based on a one-on-one personal encounter, and which has a

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the NYZCCC is a group with a number of overlapping roles and titles. To the extent that it is a religious community, it is called a *Sangha*. Although *sangha* is a term used throughout Buddhism, the NYZCCC emerges from a particular lineage of the Soto denomination of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

<sup>16</sup> Since the questionnaire itself uses certain numerical figures and properties, I have retained that formatting in this section.

theory that references unconscious factors (including neurologically defined ones).

Textually it looks for an experiential grounding of the text as a whole in which references to metaphysical concepts are understood as descriptions of unconscious contents emerging into consciousness. In this way, the text (and other people) is seen in an intricate web of causation and telos that defies simple explanation and requires the utmost in hermeneutic nuance. The hermeneutic aspect comes to the fore when all historical interpretations are seen as valid in some way and must be addressed by the theory.

Another question also received unanimous interest. It was stated this way, “How helpful would it be to have a way to deeply engage the biblical text personally, regardless of your own theological background or preference?” Given the last two sets of responses, the call for a way to engage with biblical material was evident. Probable usefulness to patients was also implied, if more varied, since even if patients have unknown scriptural interests or a defined interest in something other than scripture as a basis for spiritual understanding, a personal encounter with material that lies under the formation of the Western psyche is potentially valuable.

A few of the comments received in the “Additional Comments” section of the survey supported the conclusion that more biblical reference was needed as well as a way to personally connect to the scriptural narrative. One response was as follows, “I think it would be very helpful to explore various themes from the Bible psychologically in order to have a greater understanding of what a patient might be communicating about their personal experience when identifying with a particular biblical story. A psychological translation of the Bible would also provide a bridge to identify my own experience with the patient's experience by using the language and imagery of the Bible as a common

ground.” Another declared that, “As a non-practicing Jewish person who identifies as Buddhist I have a sense of the value of studying the Bible as a way to better understand the mythology that informs my own psychology in the deepest ways I can only begin to fathom. I imagine this kind of appreciation could only serve my work in chaplaincy.”<sup>17</sup>

To summarize, according to the survey, interest in a non-theological and non-reductive psychological approach to biblical text was seen as potentially highly valuable to the chaplains themselves and in their work. The potential to affect relationships across a wide range of encounters seemed promising and the dual goals of learning the textual translation tools as well as learning the biblical narratives themselves were both well supported.

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<sup>17</sup> Assessment of Need for Bible Tools in Chaplaincy, SurveyMonkey Data. See Appendix B for the complete text of the survey.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **HISTORICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD SCRIPTURE: IS A NEW APPROACH NEEDED?**

This section will briefly explore the historical attitudes toward religion in general as well as scripture and its use in chaplaincy settings. Although cursory, these approaches to religion can also be read as psychological stances, and so serve as a preliminary example of the method of psychological translation that will be introduced formally in the next section.

#### **How Important Is Religion Today?**

A study by Gallup and Lindsay reveals that nine out of ten people say they pray daily. The study also reported that about 92% of Americans profess a belief in God.<sup>18</sup> Richard Dawkins, in his transparently titled *The God Delusion*, makes a fairly typical case for the supremacy of rational and scientific knowledge. His stance is phenomenologically unsophisticated and extremely devout in favor of the cause of science.<sup>19</sup> Whatever Dawkins might claim, it is evident that religion is an important part of American culture. We can contrast this stance with that of Jung who, even as a man of science, understood as early as the beginning of the last century that given the significance of religion in the lives of people any psychology that failed to consider

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<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, this number does not change if the questioner asked "...or a universal spirit." From <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx#2>.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2008).



religion was no psychology at all.<sup>20</sup> This of course begs the question of what he or others mean by religion, a question which we will address below.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen suggests that Catholics would never need a psychiatrist if they made a good confession.<sup>21</sup> Jung concurs in his own way in his essay “Psychotherapy or the Clergy.” Here he makes it clear that the best practitioner in a given situation is the one who has the deepest access to the relevant symbol system.<sup>22</sup> So, for a believing Catholic, that would be a priest. This is an important detail since it becomes a self-correcting aspect of the theory and shows the theory is not attempting to be an all-encompassing meta-theory.

Pertaining to health and well-being in general, Larson confirms the view of many studies over the past five decades when he writes:

Longitudinal studies of community samples consistently find links between active spiritual/religious involvement and increased chances for living longer, pointing to the relevance of spirituality/religion as a potential health factor. For a large proportion of either medically ill or mental health patients, spirituality/religion may provide coping resources, enhance pain management, improve surgical outcomes, protect against depression, and reduce risk of substance abuse and suicide. However, study findings also show patient spirituality/religion may serve as a source of conflict linked with poorer health outcomes. Whether identifying helps or harms, research elucidates the potential relevance of patient’s spirituality/religion, with potential for collaboration with trained chaplains as part of the healthcare team to provide spiritual support or deal with spiritual distress for particular patient needs.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:2.

<sup>21</sup> Ralph A. O’Connell, “The Church and Psychiatry,” *America, The National Catholic Review*, July 2001, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:519-20.

<sup>23</sup> D. B. Larson and S. S. Larson, “Spirituality’s potential relevance to physical and emotional health: A brief review of quantitative research,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 1 (2003):37-51.

One of the big tasks still remaining is quantifying what religion is and what spirituality is, especially in the realm of health care.<sup>24</sup> Hill and Pargamant note that progress has been made, and they emphasize that the problem with quantifying religion and spirituality is that religion and spirituality are not uniform processes. They are complex experiences involving cognitive, emotional, behavioral, interpersonal, psychological, and physiological dimensions.<sup>25</sup>

Allport makes a distinction between the religiously mature person and the religiously immature person, and he relates that to a contrast between those who live their religion with those who use their religion.<sup>26</sup> Allport notes that those who are “mature or intrinsically oriented” are less prejudiced than those whom he termed “immature or extrinsically oriented.”

On a more internal level, Donahue demonstrates a positive correlation between extrinsic orientation and the two negative characteristics of prejudice and fear of death.<sup>27</sup> And Ryan, Rigby, and King confirm Jung’s personal experience of healing<sup>28</sup> when they present evidence claiming that internalizing or adopting beliefs or practices can have a significant impact on psychological well-being.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Peter C. Hill and Kenneth I. Pargament, “Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality: Implications for physical and mental health research,” *American Psychologist* 58, no. 1 (January 2003):64-74.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Charles H. Hackney and Glenn S. Sanders, “Religiosity and Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis of Recent Studies,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (March 2003): 43-55.

<sup>28</sup> R. Ryan, Scott Rigby and Kristi King, “Two types of religious internalization and their relations to religious orientations and mental health,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65, no. 3 (September 1993): 586-596.

<sup>29</sup> Hackney and Sanders, “Religiosity and Mental Health,” 43.

## **Best Practice and Patient Care: Personal Inquiry and the Understanding of Others**

Two of the best recent works on the relationship between spirituality and best practice in health care settings (including the difficult task of defining “spirituality”) are *Spirituality and Healthcare*,<sup>30</sup> and Christina Puchalski’s *Making Health Care Whole: Integrating Spirituality into Patient Care*.<sup>31</sup> In both of these works, the many complex and related areas of cultural diversity, health care practices, spirituality, and meaning are teased out in both experiential and statistical ways.

As these two works and the burgeoning literature in general shows, the last ten years has seen a tremendous growth in the understanding of palliative care in general and the importance of spiritual approaches to end-of-life treatment in hospitals in particular. At the forefront of this movement are studies that concern oncology treatment, as this is the most visible and often most frustrating area of medical treatment. However, until recently most of the commonly used quality of life (QOL) instruments have not included spirituality as a core domain. But as Marianne Brady and her co-researchers indicate, “previous research suggests that spirituality might be an important aspect of QOL for cancer patients and that it may, in fact, be especially salient in the context of life-threatening illness.” Her study used a large (n=1610) and ethnically diverse sample and addressed three specific questions: (1) Does spirituality demonstrate a positive

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<sup>30</sup> Mark R Cobb, Christina M Puchalski, Bruce Rumbold, *Oxford Textbook of Spirituality in Healthcare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Christina Puchalski and Betty R. Ferrell, *Making Health Care Whole Integrating Spirituality into Health Care* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2010).

association with QOL? (2) Is this association unique? and (3) Is there clinical utility in including spirituality in QOL measurement?<sup>32</sup>

In what would seem to be common sense but which had not until now been shown empirically in this setting, spirituality, as measured by the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy—Spiritual Well-Being (FACIT-Sp)<sup>33</sup> was

found to be associated with QOL to the same degree as physical well-being, a domain unquestioned in its importance to QOL. The significant association between spirituality and QOL was unique, remaining after controlling for core QOL domains as well as other possible confounding variables. Furthermore, spiritual well-being was found to be related to the ability to enjoy life even in the midst of symptoms, making this domain a potentially important clinical target.<sup>34</sup>

David Baker's article, "Studies of the Inner Life,"<sup>35</sup> defines spirituality from a more traditional angle and relates the importance of spirituality to understanding quality of life. Spirituality is examined through organizational religious activities, non-organizational activities, and/or as an expression of faith. Spirituality as a variable in the study of quality of life is not a new concept; however, it has returned to the scene during recent years, and has gone through an evolutionary process.

### **Religion—An Ongoing Conversation**

Daniel Pals provides a good introduction to the broad scope of approaches to religion in his book *Eight Theories of Religion*.<sup>36</sup> However there are a few critical ones that he leaves out, notably a depth psychological approach and much of the modern work in

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<sup>32</sup> Marianne Brady et al, "A case for including spirituality in quality of life measurement in oncology," *Psycho-Oncology* 8, no. 5 (Sept-Oct 1999): 417.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.facit.org/FACITOrg/Questionnaires>

<sup>34</sup> Brady, "A case for including spirituality," 417.

<sup>35</sup> David Baker, "Studies of the Inner Life," *Quality of Life Research* 12 (2003):51-57.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

hermeneutics, especially the directions taken by Ricoeur and Gadamer.<sup>37</sup> Pals begins with James Frazer, who described religious phenomena as an explanatory device which develops over time from animism through monotheism to science. We can see this attitude as being related to a folk-psychology conception in which our value of science and its benefits are read back (or over) into fantastic-seeming practices of other people—and in which of course a perspective typical of objective materialism prevails.

Pals describes Freud's attitude, not inaccurately, as similar to the title of his book on religion: *The Future of an Illusion!* He remarks that from Freud's perspective, "Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity."<sup>38</sup> Although Pals does not discuss the powerful contributions that Freud made, such as the concept of linguistic and unconscious over-determination or the idea of symbolic meaning, we can see in this approach yet another perspective that many have toward anything that smacks of the supernatural.

For Emile Durkheim, "The idea of society is the soul of religion." That is, social facts are sacred. They are in fact the carrier of the social sentiments, "providing symbols and rituals that enable people to express the deep emotions which anchor them to their community."<sup>39</sup> In a sense combining the former two, Pals invokes the social and deceptive aspects of Karl Marx's famous depiction of religion as the "opiate of the masses" and instrument of capital oppression by validating the norm.

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<sup>37</sup> I am referring specifically to *Freud and Philosophy*, and *Truth and Method*.

<sup>38</sup> Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 53.

<sup>39</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 314.

With Max Weber, Pals writes, we approach a much more modern and complex view of religious practice: not only is it the source of social action from a functional view, it addresses needs below the surface that are intrinsic to personal and social well-being.<sup>40</sup> This trend continues with Mircea Eliade's understanding of the sacred as a real and viable category of experience. He writes, "My duty is to show the grandeur, sometimes naïve, sometimes monstrous and tragic, of archaic modes of being."<sup>41</sup> Eliade's approach was in many ways the first attempt to take on its own terms.

If Eliade initiated this discipline-changing approach, it would be brought to fruition by the anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard. His attention to minute detail in field work, his emphasis on staying within the vocabulary and understanding of his subjects in the field, and his nearly discarding overarching conceptual frameworks changed the way anthropologists understood and performed field work. He came quite close to the important psychological discipline of "staying with image" and yet his strength was also a weakness, since it is hard to build or teach theory if there are no conceptual guidelines in one's approach. Pals' description culminates with Clifford Geertz' view of religion as a cultural system. That is, Geertz claimed that religions are explainable only within their own culture of meaning-systems.<sup>42</sup> While this stance does little harm to whatever person or culture one is studying, it also lacks a way of appreciating a symbolic system from outside its own closed loop.

This is where I have found tremendous support from four quite different but related areas of study that form an interesting cross section of evidence and explanation:

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<sup>40</sup> Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 183.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 284.

the nascent field of the cognitive study of the unconscious; breakthroughs in language and the study of metaphor; the burgeoning field of evolutionary anthropology (and psychology); and the symbolic and archetypal approach of Carl Jung.

This thesis uses the word “symbolic” in a particular way. For Jung, a symbol was clearly differentiated from a sign—that is, there is no direct correspondence to something as that would mean something more like “sign.” Instead to call something symbolic is to refer to any experiential event, linguistic or otherwise, as overdetermined. It may have many valences and directions, some more measurable than others. As a means of comparison, more levels and shadings means more symbolic, and more energetic or personally motivating also means more symbolic. A symbol, in this conception, is created out of the unconscious processes and cannot be controlled by any ego function. That is, experientially, it comes to us. Finally, a powerful symbol draws us personally and collectively to use it, as it is the best description of something not yet fully known. This also means there is a kind of anticipatory quality and a futurity to a relevant symbol. This is true even when the symbol appears to be embedded in the past, such as a reference to the Founding Fathers, since what is anticipated is a greater sense of order and security in reference to a set of values or an emotional tone. When a symbol finally becomes understood, assimilated, or just irrelevant, it drops out of awareness. Irrelevancy occurs when a historical symbol is superseded by a more relevant one. For example, the image of Eleusis or the Taurobolium gave way to the image of the cross. However, as we will see, though the irrelevant symbols disappear, any unassimilated qualities continue on in different forms.

All of the above indicates that we need to use a kind of “translation” to approach anything symbolic, and this approach is made more complex depending on the authority given to the symbol, the understanding of its context, its sacredness, the role of historical scholarship, and the embedded nature of any personally felt sense of meaning. Additionally, the fields of epistemology and hermeneutics have wrestled with related concerns around the problem of subject/object, the ontology of the inner and outer, the difference between believer and nonbeliever, as well as with the concept of the unconscious, the role of society and definition of deviance, and of personal relevance as a category for every person who struggles with a question of meaning.<sup>43</sup> We are not going to solve these concerns here, but being familiar with the beautiful and subtle development of these issues in the Western tradition allows a better grasp of the particular exercise being proposed.

## **The Development of Depth Psychological Tools**

### **The Question of Text and Image**

It should be said at this point that my understanding of the term “image” is related to our concept of “text.” This is a big concept which has changed considerably in the development of hermeneutics, especially if we take into consideration the implication of the Buddhist doctrine of co-dependent arising.<sup>44</sup> It is also related to a particular facet of

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<sup>43</sup>This is a sweeping statement, perhaps best supported in survey works by the phenomenologically based Thomas Seebohm, *Hermeneutics, Method and Methodology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004) and the psychological crossover work of John Greenwood, *Explanation and Experiment in Social Psychological Science: Realism and the Social Constitution of Action* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989). A succinct introduction is also given in <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>.

<sup>44</sup>There are many references in various Sutras, one is <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.002.than.html>



Jung's work.<sup>45</sup> For me it is useful to think of an image or text not primarily as a static picture but a whole experience. If we consider any experience which might be explored in analysis we find that it includes a verbal mode of exchange (including periods of silence) accompanying an affective state, an implied behavior, as well as a narrative image in motion in the imagination of the analysand. That is, rarely does the term image refer to an artistic or plastic image—what we might call a picture—although exceptions occur.

If we think about the image as the whole of a dream or as an interaction with the analyst it is clear we are referring to the dynamic of a total gestalt (embodied and over time) in the experience of a particular person. Jung does propose a specific metaphor for the times when we become specific about identifying the structure of a particular situation—which is necessary for both teaching and theory-making. He mentions that we do in fact shoot and kill the “moving stag of psyche” in order to perform an histological procedure.<sup>46</sup> Of course even this histological slicing is done in an embodied affective state over time! Nevertheless this differentiation of the static thought aspect and the moving flow of experience aspect is a crude but useful way to include the metonymy/metaphor distinction which was being developed in linguistics during the same period.

The image in this totalizing sense can be thought of as the product of imagination and as the carrier of potential energy. This energy is actualized and made available to the analysand through a rigorous exploration of the functional parameters of the image: each

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<sup>45</sup> C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, vol. 5 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>46</sup> C. G. Jung, *Structure & Dynamics of the Psyche*, vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 183.

image contains references to certain kinds of relationships, guidelines, and attitudes that are clarified by exploration in analysis.<sup>47</sup> As Jung shows, only by understanding and assimilating these guidelines is this potential energy available.

### **Jung and Religion**

As the work and approach of C.G. Jung is one of our foundations, we can orient ourselves to one of his deep principles by considering the quotation he inscribed on his doorway as well as on his tombstone: *Vocatus atque non vocatus, Deus aderit.*<sup>48</sup>

This text has a vague provenance but a likely early source is Erasmus who was quoting a Spartan proverb. He almost certainly meant a plural divinity when invoking Deus, whereas when Abelard employed it, he was thinking of singular Christian God. In either case a translation would be: called or uncalled, divinity (either God or the gods) will be present. Jung used this to refer to the psyche, and it stands for our first psychological translation. Jung understood that behind all images of the absolute was the psyche, which he expressed in this way:

Since the development of consciousness requires the withdrawal of all the projections we can lay our hands on, it is not possible to maintain any non-psychological doctrine about the gods. If the historical process of world de-spiritualization continues as hitherto, then everything of a divine or demonic character outside us must return to the psyche, to the inside of the unknown man, whence it apparently originated.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Jung, *On Psychic Energy*, vol. 8, *CW*, 91. Because images are the primary carriers of psychological energy, and because this energy becomes available when the interaction with them alters the subjective attitude, producing or accompanying a change in all aspects of the analytic subject from behavior.

<sup>48</sup> Usually translated as “Bidden or unbidden, the gods are present.” Mentioned by Jung in a letter, C. G. Jung, *Letters: 1951-1961*, vol. 2, ed. G. Adler, A. Jaffe, and R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

<sup>49</sup> Jung, *CW* 11:141.

This means that the development of consciousness requires a new understanding of those things which move us and which appear authoritative. Jung's understanding was that we are still as naïve and unconscious, as driven by those things outside the influence of our will, as ever. We can either ignore these influences, which at one point were called gods, demons, spirits and angels, or we can understand them as potent and authoritative. The former leads to a kind of unreflective action based on habit and prejudice (not meaning negative prejudice necessarily) whereas the latter opens up room for dialogue and reflection.

After all, "wherever unconsciousness reigns, there is bondage and possession."<sup>50</sup> This line will be important when we get to biblical references to bondage, but for now it is enough to see its link to a lack of awareness. For Jung there was a kind of urgency as well as a particular fulcrum at our disposal. We do not have to share this urgency in a literal sense, but we can see that in experiences of urgency lies an opportunity. Jung writes:

We are living in what the Greeks called the right time for a 'metamorphosis of the gods,' i.e. of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science.<sup>51</sup>

We can read that as a psychological as well as a literal statement, in that it is possible that our culture has to come to terms with technology and science. However it may also be true that a person in the grip of an internal change of principles and symbols

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<sup>50</sup> Jung, *CW* 11:138.

<sup>51</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, vol. 10 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 88.

becomes motivated to reconsider the extensions of him or herself in the world—that is, the technology that extends influence beyond our personal selves.

Jung maintains that no psychic value can disappear without being replaced by another of equivalent intensity.<sup>52</sup> (This is especially important when we remember that we are every bit as superstitious as the ancients, but that the gods have changed names and become the neuroses.)

The causal point of view tends by its very nature towards uniformity of meaning, that is, towards a fixed significance of symbols. The final point of view, on the other hand, perceives in the altered dream-image the expression of an altered psychological situation. It recognizes no fixed meaning of symbols. From this standpoint, all the dream-images are important in themselves, each one having a special significance of its own, to which, indeed, it owes its inclusion in the dream...The symbol in the dream has more the value of a parable: it does not conceal, it teaches.<sup>53</sup>

Further:

Among all my patients in the second half of life there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. This of course has nothing whatever to do with a particular creed or membership of a church.<sup>54</sup>

This leads to another way of thinking about this project in its most general sense, that is, our goal is to translate the Bible narratives into a new and radically foreign language: as the self-unfolding of the collective psyche in the West.<sup>55</sup> As mentioned

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<sup>52</sup> Jung, *CW*, 8:5.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:509.

<sup>55</sup> I am reminded here of Seamus Heaney's comment in his introduction to *Beowulf*: *But between one's sense of readiness to take on a subject and the actual inscription of the first lines, there is always a problematic hiatus. To put it another way: from the point of view of the writer, words in a poem need what the Polish poet Anna Swir once called 'the equivalent of a biological right to life'. The erotics of composition are essential to the process, some pre-reflective excitation and orientation, some sense that*

above our method includes a traditional academic exploration of the text, a cultural appreciation of the text in context (i.e., its importance within a context of belief) and then a number of admittedly non-contextual operations, the most important of which is the general view that every word of the Bible is true, but true as both a record and a current image of the unfolding of the psyche of a group.

The first of these operations can be called amplification. This is an identification of themes and patterns from the target narrative that share similarities with other text and images. The comparative content could derive from other ancient or modern mythology, from aspects of science from physics to archeology, and to patterns of life and meaning in one's personal life or the lives of others. This operation sets the narrative context as well as providing a basis for identifying the possible psychological patterns in the text.

Amplification is akin to a philological technique. That is, in a way similar to the translation of an ancient text which one does not know, the idea is to look for parallels that are at least somewhat more understood. This is also how one builds understanding at a cognitive or even relational level—there are many small indications of mutual understanding which allow even two native speakers of the same language to assess whether they are “on the same page.” This colloquial expression is important since it indicates the translational effort going on all the time, even between members of the same cohort who share the very closest set of references.

One of the tasks of the course will be a difficult approach to theological stances. Theology itself is seen as a manifestation of psychic structure, and yet akin to much of this depth of psychological reflection, becomes transparent to the person reflecting at a

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*your own little verse-craft can dock safe and sound at the big quay of the language. And this is as true for translators as it is for poets attempting original work.*

certain point. As Jung often pointed out, unlike all other endeavors, we are using the very tool of investigation—that is, the psyche—to investigate itself.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, different theologies are all seen as valid models of approaching a psychic center, as long as they can be accurately translated into a meaningful discourse.

After considering the above it will be possible to translate the text into psychological language. Another way of referring to this, based on Kaufmann's work, is to find the orient of the pericope or image.

As the twenty-first century approaches we are witnessing the emergence of a whole new world-view growing out of depth psychology. This new science studies the psyche as an experienceable, objective phenomenon. It takes old data and approaches them in a new way. For instance, mythology, religion, and sacred scriptures of all kinds are taken out of their traditional contexts and understood psychologically, that is they are seen as the phenomenology of the objective psyche. From this view the Bible is considered to be a self-revelation of the objective psyche.<sup>57</sup>

There have been a number of efforts in the twentieth century to relate biblical texts or concepts with psychological practices. In *Effective Biblical Counseling* by Lawrence Crabb, there is a claim that counseling is what the local pastor is ordained to do, as a part of Christian caring, and that it frees the parishioner to worship God more fully and more freely.<sup>58</sup> It is rife with hermeneutic naiveté (or one could say it is aimed at a highly circumscribed audience), but shows that the two realms are becoming linked in common association.

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<sup>56</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 18 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 12.

<sup>57</sup> Edward Edinger, *Encounter with the Self: William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job* (New York: Inner City Books, 1986), 11.

<sup>58</sup> Lawrence Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975).

This linking becomes more overt in *Jung and the Bible*,<sup>59</sup> as well as with *The Kingdom Within* by John Sanford.<sup>60</sup> The former is was a breakthrough at the time in that it showed how Jung could be brought into a traditional hermeneutic understanding of the Bible and it is still a relevant exposition of Jung's view of biblical narrative. The latter is a beginning in the field of understanding the Jungian approach to narrative in therapeutic application.

Although there is not time, nor probably the need, to do more than mention Tillich's brilliant *Dynamics of Faith*, it does have to be said that his careful unwrapping of the concepts of doubt and ultimate concern strongly influence the approach of this project.<sup>61</sup> Tillich understood, at the structural level, Jung's conception of self and the way that it orients our lives. He was able to see through the language of both Jung and much theological discourse to give what is in my opinion still one of the most incisive and powerful descriptions of the logic of the soul—that is, of the deep levels of psychology.

### **The Question of Depth Psychology and Mythology**

Although Philo of Alexandria may get credit for the first systematic application of analogy and metaphor in biblical understanding, we are going to fast-forward to Carl Jung for a psychological view of scripture and the connection between mythic narrative and psychological states. In his essay "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," Jung makes the connection between dream structure and psychosis. He writes, "In the dream,

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<sup>59</sup> Wayne Rollins, *Jung and the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983).

<sup>60</sup> John Sanford, *The Kingdom Within: The Inner Meaning of Jesus' Sayings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987).

<sup>61</sup> Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2001).

as in the products of psychoses, there are numberless interconnections to which one can find parallels only in mythological associations of ideas.”<sup>62</sup>

Robert Segal’s book, *Jung on Mythology*, is a good source for the development and understanding of Jung’s use of myth.<sup>63</sup> Segal shows how Jung differentiates his theory from Freud’s by understanding that a layer of the psyche, the layer from which dreams come, is not personal and cannot be reduced to an individual’s past. In a similar way, myths are not projections of the individual subject but are rather artifacts of a shared human structure, much like our shared anatomy. This argument has tremendous recent support from evolutionary anthropology. The strongest argument is around the function of myth—that it not only satisfies the need to connect with unconscious processes, but it actually works as a conduit or arena in which to experience an aspect of non-ego authority.

Mary Louise von Franz used Jung’s method of understanding and translating myths and fairy tales with great success. Her work remains some of the most relevant and valuable in the field. In works as diverse as *Creation Myths Time and Matter*, *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales*, *The Psychological Meaning of Redemption Motifs in Fairy Tales*, *Anima and Animus in Fairy Tales*, and *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, she finds structural and experiential connections between personal experience, psychological theory, and mythic narrative.

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<sup>62</sup> Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, vol. 9i of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 160.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Segal, *Jung on Mythology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).



“Here again we come to the same conclusion: fairy tales mirror the more simple but also more basic structure—the bare skeleton—of the psyche.”<sup>64</sup> In understanding myths and fairy tales, von Franz takes us through the four narrative stages of setting, development, crisis, and lysis, which is same the approach taken toward narrative in Jung’s seminar on Children’s Dreams.

In *Myth in the New Testament*, Ian Henderson poses the question of whether humanity can survive without myth. He states that mythology is a basic and necessary form of human thought. He claims that myth is not the way in which the human mind understands religious ideas, but is the only way in which the “supersensible” can be grasped. This is not too different from Jung’s more philosophical explanation of myth. Jung sometimes refers to myth as though he were a historian of religion (from the nineteenth century)<sup>65</sup> in which case myth is seen as a narrative about supernatural beings, and is often assumed to explain something about the world or about the situation or fate of humans. In his more nuanced thinking, such as found in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung gets very close to the sort of emergent and contextual approach of post-Gadamer hermeneutics.<sup>66</sup> Jung argues that myth appears in many forms depending on our attitude and the uses we make of it. At one end, myth is merely an old story that is known by some group of people. At the other, it is invisible because it is called reality. That is, myth is for Jung the set of assumptions, usually unconscious, that allow us to function in the social and physical world. We can become conscious of it to some small extent, and it

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<sup>64</sup> Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, rev. ed. (Boston: Shambhala, 1996), 26.

<sup>65</sup> I am not thinking so much of ancient theories like those of Euhemerus or Herodotus but the powerful and wide ranging theories of E.B. Tylor or James Frazer.

<sup>66</sup> C.G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York: Harcourt Harvest, 1955).

can become embedded in narrative – which itself might be held as sacred, thought of as analogical or dismissed. The bottom line is that it is present for everyone in some form, and that much of it is not available to consciousness except in its effects.

Bernard Batto, an Old Testament scholar, using a less subtle understanding, indicates that myth is present throughout the entire Bible; but in his work *Slaying the Dragon*,<sup>67</sup> he places the emphasis on the Old Testament – seeing much of the narrative there derived from older stories that have collective resonance. This is the beginning of a mythic but not dismissive attitude toward scripture.

Gerald Slusser, in his book *From Jung to Jesus: Myth and Consciousness in the New Testament*,<sup>68</sup> examines the archetype of the hero by drawing parallels between the life of Jesus, according to the Gospel record, and the archetypal pattern of the hero.

The volume *In Quest of the Hero* brings together a number of important attempts to understand the Gospel narratives through a mythological lens. Lord Raglan and then Alan Dundes identify twenty-two aspects of the hero's journey in "The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus," and then correlate the life of Jesus, according to the Gospels, with these aspects, and find many of the hero dimensions in the life of Jesus. This can be seen as a de-mythologizing or a reinvigorating of the text, depending on one's initial stance. Otto Rank, examines these facets in his essay, "The Myth of the Birth of the Hero" which compares and contrasts fifteen stories about heroes, including Moses and Jesus. Finally

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<sup>67</sup> Bernard Batto, *Slaying the Dragon, Mythmaking in Biblical Tradition* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1992).

<sup>68</sup> Gerald Slusser, *From Jung to Jesus: Myth and Consciousness in the New Testament* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986).

Robert Segal turns the tables and examines the trend itself, unpacking the history and purpose of the movement itself.<sup>69</sup>

In *Symbols of Transformation*,<sup>70</sup> Jung's great breakthrough work and the book which signified the moment of his breakup with Freud, he examines the life of Christ as the unconscious pattern of incarnation and sacrifice that is typical of any psychological growth. The parallels with the process of transformation are especially revealing since they show resonances in concept and experience without reducing religion or narrative to anything causal or for that matter as something in themselves caused-by psychological process. This area of non-injury to theology was very important to Jung: he was attempting to avoid metaphysical speculation. It should be noted however that any interpretive stance that deviates from a traditional norm will have its detractors, and even Jung's good friend the priest Father White was never wholly comfortable with Jung's approach.<sup>71</sup>

### **A New Definition of Mythology: The Holding-Symbol System**

There can be no doubt that the Christian concept of the imago Dei embodied in Christ meant an all-embracing totality that even includes the animal side of man. Nevertheless the Christ-symbol lacks wholeness in the modern psychological sense since it does not include the dark side of things but specifically excludes it in the form of a Luciferian opponent.<sup>72</sup>

“What does one do with any dimension of the personality that does not adhere to the Christian demand for moral purity?” Jung argues that at its essence, neurosis is self-division and that an attempt to be overly righteous will exacerbate or could even create

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<sup>69</sup> Otto Rank, FitzRoy Richard Somerset Raglan, and Alan Dundes, *In Quest of the Hero The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>70</sup> C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

<sup>71</sup> Ann Lammers, *The Jung-White Letters* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Jung, *CW*, 5:41.

this neurotic split. In a similar fashion, Wilhelm Reich says the majority of suffering is caused by a person trying to be other than what he or she is. According to Reich, this occurs primarily by denying one's animal nature.<sup>73</sup>

Jung asks, "What does spiritual suffering mean?" He theorizes that the quandary in which modern people find themselves is that they are never healed with what they think for themselves, but only by revelations of a wisdom greater than their own.

Some authors have commented on Jung's purported project to heal Christianity, and in fact Jung criticizes it on purely theoretical and mythological grounds. Jung thought that leaving out both evil and the feminine from the Godhead (not to mention eschewing the four-part structure of the psyche) left it open to various kinds of splintering. This is a very big topic and tangent – and I have to disagree with Jung to the extent that I understand the argument. However this thesis is not affected by that argument and does not take up that issue. This hermeneutic perspective is not interested in changing a personal or collective symbol system or the personal view of a patient. Similarly, there is a rich but tangential discussion of certain theological differences in the correspondence of Jung with Martin Buber (and Victor White, mentioned above) which will not be closely considered here.

On the other hand there is the argument that Jung's approach, perhaps along with any hermeneutic endeavor, is a critique of Christianity: David L. Miller continues the theme of the assault on Christianity with his article, "Attack Upon Christendom!: The Anti-Christianism of Depth Psychology." This stance is not one we can ignore as it points to the heart of any hermeneutic endeavor. Miller's article is found in an important work

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<sup>73</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis*, rev. ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980).

for any Christian who is also drawn to theories of the psyche, Robert Moore's *Jung's Challenge to Contemporary Religion*.<sup>74</sup> In his article, Miller begins by mentioning a work by Soren Kierkegaard, *Attack on Christendom* (1854-55). According to Miller, that is exactly what Kierkegaard did; he attacked Christianity's theology and practices. From Kierkegaard, he moves to Freud, Jung, Lacan, and Hillman. I have no doubt that, as mentioned above, not only can psychology de-mythologize religion in a way that robs it of its authority, but also that any hermeneutic stance of any kind creates a level of doubt for a believer that can either be helpful – if one is interested in inquiry - or merely upsetting if one is not. Jung mentions that the psyche itself is an imposition on the natural order, and so I would concur that any broadening of scope – and hermeneutics can be nothing other than this - will in fact injure a stance which does not want to be broadened. Jung also states, in his essay “Psychotherapists or the Clergy” that from a healing perspective, the best person to handle questions of meaning within a symbol system is the expert in that system.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, for an active believer in any system, the stance would not be to try to convince them of a psychological approach but rather to find someone who is embedded in his or her system.<sup>76</sup>

### **Jung's Psychological Approach**

Although there are many types of psychological approaches to text and people, the one taken here is based on Jung's understanding of the psyche. For Jung, the psyche is that uniquely human capacity to have a relationship between what we experience as will

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<sup>74</sup> Robert Moore, *Jung's Challenge to Contemporary Religion* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron, 1987).

<sup>75</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:380.

<sup>76</sup> A heartbreaking and beautiful example of this is found in Ann Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998).

or agency and what pulls or pushes the subject from without or within. That is, everyone experiences a personal self of some kind and also other forces that work on that subjective person. These forces can be thought of as mundane pressures and influences of life, society, and duty, or they can be thought of as impulses based in the body, as compelling ideas or compulsions to act or speak, or finally these forces can be thought of as something in the extra-human dimension as spirits, demons, gods or the one God.

For Jung, all of these extra-ego influences appear to the human subject filtered through the mind. Thus for Jung the objects or ideas that are referred to cannot be directly shared by another person, and yet they can be compared as ideas or descriptions of experience. At this level of description they are all what Jung refers to *psychic facts*. This stance allows Jung to proceed, like his friend William James, from a more or less phenomenological stance and so to see all experience as both valid *and* as a product of the infinitely complicated and nuanced human experiential filter called the psyche.

This stance has a number of important implications. First and foremost, it allows the beginning of a stance that is both experientially affirming and hermeneutically critical. However, as a physician and psychiatrist, Jung was also grounded, in a way that philosophers are not, in a practice of enhancing well-being. So on one hand all texts and views are seen as unfolding according to the usually unseen logic of the psyche, but on the other the psyche does not deceive. Rather, like any bodily function or unknown language, it expresses itself directly and in a way that is testable according to all of the suppositions of modern science (including linguistic science), albeit perhaps in a way that is not yet known. So, like a foreign language, one cannot criticize it for being not-understood nor for having a logic unlike one's own; however, once translated it should

have the same coherence as any aspect of language or any medical diagnosis. Some extended examples will follow in the next chapter.

### **Text and Psyche**

This way of reading the Bible has both ancient and modern origins. In the more specific and recent form, one could say that within the biblical community it begins in earnest with Rollins' work *Jung and the Bible*,<sup>77</sup> which reads the bible as a "soul book." Rollins defends his position by claiming that readers have used the Bible in many ways over the centuries, and inspiration comes in many forms. From this perspective the symbolic/depth reading is no great stretch. In fact, it is a truism in biblical study that if one examines even the most literal approach to the Bible, there are a number of unjustifiable starting assumptions that smooth-over various contradictions in the narrative or which allow a particular understanding of difficult passages.

The Jungian-symbolic approach does not claim a higher level of truth or any less of a dependence on irrational starting assumptions. Rather it attempts to be more transparent about those assumptions and to offer a reading that may enhance personal understanding and appreciation amongst readers that do not have a living relationship with the biblical text or who would like a broader way of reading it that does not do violence to modern hermeneutics.

John Sanford, Episcopal priest and Jungian analyst, has certainly utilized Rollins' understanding of biblical interpretation in *Mystical Christianity, A Psychological Interpretation of the Gospel of John*.<sup>78</sup> Sanford develops a usable model that presages the

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<sup>77</sup> Wayne G. Rollins, *Jung and the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983).

<sup>78</sup> John A. Sanford, *Mystical Christianity: A Psychological Commentary on the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1993).

next generation of symbolic criticism. He begins with historical, textual and redaction criticism to establish the context, and then he moves to the symbolic, or what I have called the layer of psychological translation.

Lawrence Jaffe utilizes Jung's archetypal psychology to inform his take on modern religious experience in *Liberating the Heart: Spirituality and Jungian Psychology*,<sup>79</sup> and *Celebrating Soul: Preparing for the New Religion*.<sup>80</sup> This work is not as nuanced exegetically as Rollins' but takes more care with the experience of modern Christians who are struggling with the relevance of scriptural understanding given the plethora of other spiritual approaches that seem to have something to say in the current milieu.

William Dols's article "*The Church as Crucible for Transformation*,"<sup>81</sup> offers a way of viewing the biblical text that is in line with Jung's and Hillman's beliefs that it is more beneficial to see the archetypal dimension of the Scripture than to try to pin it down to specific actions and concepts. That is, he takes the biblical images as very general categories of experience that can both orient the reader in an experiential arena and initiate further personal exploration by using the imagination to continue or expand a given narrative. It should be noted that Dols works from within the church as an Episcopal priest – so although he is embedded in a faith community and does not see any contradiction with using Jungian ideas, others (like Miller, mentioned above) are not so

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<sup>79</sup> Lawrence W. Jaffe, *Liberating the heart: Spirituality and Jungian Psychology* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1990).

<sup>80</sup> Lawrence W. Jaffe, *Celebrating Soul: Preparing for the New Religion* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1999).

<sup>81</sup> William Dols, "The Church as Crucible for Transformation," in *Jung's Challenge to Contemporary Religion*, ed. R. L. Moore and M. Stein, 127-146 (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1987).



sanguine. Dols goes a step further when he writes that “The elucidations of the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship and the insights of depth psychology are needed to explore the religious experience of Jesus and to face its implications for us. Mode three is unavailable without a bridge between both disciplines of enquiry.”<sup>82</sup>

Three years after his work on Mark, McGann wrote a similar work about John’s gospel, *Journeying within Transcendence: The Gospel of John through a Jungian Perspective*.<sup>83</sup> Unlike the approach demonstrated in this project, both Sanford and McGann deal with broad story elements and do not translate the story the way one would a myth, fairy tale, or dream. Once again, the differences are in the realm of both the attention to the specificity of the language and the initial assumptions about authority. That is, when looking at a myth, fairy tale, or dream, every detail of the story is significant to the translation and the narrative is seen as authoritative only if the experience of it is transformational in some way.

Schuyler Brown, in his concise and formative book *Text and Psyche*, gives an example of a theologically and psychologically well-informed way to approach biblical scripture.<sup>84</sup> Brown’s work is the most careful with both exegetical and psychological techniques to date, and we are indebted to him for bringing a new and lively perspective to biblical inquiry. However his audience is people who already read the Bible and who find it authoritative. Since I will be mostly addressing people for whom the Bible’s

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<sup>82</sup> Dols, “The Church as Crucible,” 133.

<sup>83</sup> D. McGann, *Journeying within Transcendence: The Gospel of John through a Jungian Perspective* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988).

<sup>84</sup> Schuyler Brown, *Text and Psyche* (New York, Chiron Publishing, 2003).

authority will have to be discovered (or rediscovered), if it is to be there at all, this project needs different assumptions and starting-points.

### **The Good and the Bad with Edinger**

The Jungian psychoanalyst and author Edward Edinger's various works, including *The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the Old Testament*<sup>85</sup>, were a breakthrough in their time and his approach is in some ways the closest to the method I will use. However, his particular method and use of psychological translation now show signs of aging. Not only was he unconcerned with some of the hermeneutic texts that are important to this thesis, he describes a very particular vision of the relationship between the ego and (Jungian) self, and all of his works end up supporting this vision. I have developed a little suspicion when an author encounters no surprises when ostensibly exploring. Also Edinger, while important in his time, carries a somewhat Calvinistic sense of repercussion for not obeying the voice of the Jungian self.<sup>86</sup>

If we compare this approach briefly to that of Freud, we find that he employed the numerous associations produced by the patient to an image to discovering a formerly unconscious thought-structure. Once discovered it could no longer be described as absurd or confused as it had an emotional reality and an innate logic. However the so-called manifest dream or image was seen as essentially deceptive. Since it was no more than a distorted, abbreviated, and misunderstood translation there could be no use of philological methods, and this left the field open to his famous (and exclusively sexual)

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<sup>85</sup> Edward F. Edinger, *The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the Old Testament* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1986).

<sup>86</sup> Edward Edinger's many books have been informative on various Biblical themes, but his foundational assumption about the nature of the psyche is structure, what he calls the "ego-self axis" ends up limiting his explorations, calcifying the formulations and flattening his perspective.

reductive interpretation. In his view the underlying latent dream thoughts contained the meaning of the dream, while its manifest content was simply a make-believe, a facade, which could serve as a starting point of the associations but not for the interpretation. This meant that the specific aspects of the image could be ignored. However for Jung, the particularity of the image was where the importance emerged as it showed the unique aspects of an individual in her or her struggle to emerge from the grip of the collective and unconscious norms.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1998), 27.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS PROJECT**

#### **Interpretation and Translation**

This thesis and the academic course that was its test bed is an exercise in a particular kind of psychological understanding, and since everyone and every text has a different point of view; it is an exercise in translation. Translation implies a number of things that make this process more challenging than it appears at first. Before getting into the details, it is important to differentiate this process from that of interpretation. For centuries, interpretation has had a range of meanings, from explication to explanation (of meaning), to a conception of behavior, to a particular rendering. Of course, it is used in psychoanalytic literature as well, where it indicates a more specific, but also more problematic, process.

Briefly, for Freud and for the whole trajectory of psycho-dynamic theory, the images, feelings and behaviors that emanate from the so-called unconscious are essentially deceitful chimera (compared with reality) and the analyst's job is to correct the errant statements by recasting them according to both a structure of psyche and a single conception of psychopathology that applies to all people. Fantasy and dreams are explained according to their deviation from a "reality principle" and shown to emanate from "wishful thinking" about magical solutions to the impossible sexual yearnings at the core of every person. Interpretations are the name for the verbal interventions which are given in analysis.

Typically these interventions show how the subject's genuine affects, goals and concepts are being hidden; if the patient agrees then the analysis is considered successful. If the patient does not, then the patient is considered to be "resisting" the superior knowledge and insight of the doctor. At this point an analysis of the "defenses of the ego" takes place—and both processes are defined as being only accessible to the doctor. This leaves the patient in the situation of either agreeing or being wrong, regardless of whether or not the interpretation feels correct or the analysis helps.

The question of what it means for an analysis to help is an extremely complex one. First we have to take into consideration the stance of medical anthropology which shows that not only are all helping professions engaged in the support of the status quo and of course their own financial success but may even define mental or spiritual illness in a way that gives them a unique niche. For Jung, the clarity of an individual's relationship to his or her own unconscious aspects in dialogue with the relationship to other people and to the collective of society was paramount. Although in his alchemical works Jung approaches a level of beauty, depth of inspiration and subtlety in his discussions of the relationship of the ego and the eternal other that rival anything in the mystical literature, Jung was also very practical. His final determination for the value of analysis was the following:

Is there, as a matter of fact, any better truth about the ultimate things than the one that helps you to live?... You can say, for instance, that life is a disease with a very bad prognosis: it lingers on for years, only to end with death, or that normality is a general constitutional defect; or that man is an animal with a fatally overgrown brain. This kind of thinking is the prerogative of habitual grumblers with bad digestions. No one can know what the ultimate things are. We must therefore take them as we experience them. And if such experience helps to make life healthier,

more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say: 'this was the grace of God.'<sup>88</sup>

Getting back to Freud, this description of the analytic process is overly simplistic but is not meant to be a straw man set-up. Rather, it is meant as a way to contrast the radically different way that Jung conceptualized many of the same clinical experiences that Freud was having. After all, there is something unknown in each person—and the unknown part rises up in strange behavior and affect and fantasy. The analyst is called upon to make sense of that in some way, and the patient may agree or not. Furthermore, affect can indeed be hidden, even from the one's own consciousness. Jung, however, takes an almost opposite point of view as to why all of this happens and how best to navigate an individual's suffering. His conclusions have particular implications for the reading of texts, the conceptualization of psychopathology and the treatment of chaplaincy patients.

After all, what fate could any text have if, like the common and even medical view of any fantasy, it is seen as essentially false, essentially less-than the wisdom of the reader, essentially in need of correction and motivated by unfulfilled sexual urges or any other single and biological drive? The answer, of course, comes quite clearly in the title of Freud's major monograph on religion, *The Future of an Illusion*.<sup>89</sup>

In stark contrast is James Hillman's description of analysis as soul-making. By this he was not referring to the creation of a substance or to a material reference to the soul. Rather Hillman describes it this way,

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<sup>88</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:167.

<sup>89</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989).

By Soul I mean, first of all, a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself. This perspective is reflective; it mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens. Between us and events, between the doer and the deed, there is a reflective moment-and soul-making means differentiating this middle ground....In another attempt upon the idea of soul I suggested that the word refers to that unknown component which makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, is communicated in love, and has a religious concern...Now I am adding three necessary modifications. First, 'soul' refers to the deepening of events into experiences; second, the significance soul makes whether in love or in religious concern, derives from its special relation with death. And third, by 'soul' I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical.<sup>90</sup>

### **The Proposed Audience**

This project and the course which is its immediate manifestation are designed for a particular group – the group of chaplains mentioned above – who have certain professional needs and goals. However the personal and professional goals of this group are both diverse and inclusive of more general populations. So, this approach has value of different kinds depending on the orientation and background of each reader. To start with a consideration of the most conservative population, I imagine that this approach would have no value or a highly negative value if one's stance was that one was already in possession of the single, exclusive, authoritative understanding of the Bible. From this perspective, all other approaches are likely to be seen as irrelevant, insulting, or threatening.

However, for those for whom the Bible is authoritative already but for whom there is also some level of curiosity about other ways to investigate this authority, then this approach can provide added dimensions of understanding and experience. Even

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<sup>90</sup> James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1975), 16.

differences in theological approaches can be seen as psychologically relevant as long as one is open to seeing it. This stance is important when hermeneutics are considered as modes of interpersonal communication and especially in the activity of self-exploration. It is extremely difficult to see one's own perspective, and a study of hermeneutics can help clarify one's own psyche.

On the other hand, if the Bible is not seen as authoritative this method can open up the numinous aspects of it. More effort is usually required for this opening, especially if the reader is either skeptical or negatively disposed toward the text, however this approach does assume there is value in any text that is widespread and so will look for patterns of relevance that correspond to other symbol systems.

Apart from the specific reading of biblical text, this method can provide a psychologically relevant way to read any scripture. This is an extension of the former point since scripture of all kind is seen as the collective tracks or traces of the numinous in a collective or cultural form. That is, even outside of a living community of worship, the text is not seen as dead, but rather like an archeological find that can both open up layers of culture but also indicate ways that humans currently behave.

Although we are psychologically translating these texts, which have already been linguistically translated into English, we need to make sense of those texts which claim to be untranslatable – that is, some texts (or their traditions) claim that they can only be read in the original language. The Orthodox and Kabbalistic Jewish as well as Islamic understanding of their respective texts is that the very forms of words in the original languages are uniquely powerful. In fact, the *Masechet Sofrim* claims that “the Torah cannot be fully translated.” *Because* of this, one needs to learn the language itself to



understand the text. We can read this statement as similar to Jung's claim that his writings cannot be understood unless the experience he has been writing about has already been achieved by the reader.

From this perspective, the unfamiliar texts and images are seen as if they are icons—that is, as windows that might allow a wholly new experience. This is distinct from apperception in which a new experience is put into an existing category; instead we are trying to forge a new category altogether.

All groups or religious cohorts that refer to a foundational authoritative text privilege certain sections for their own, usually hidden, agenda. We will do the same differentiation of the narrative landscape, but as a conscious practice that can be refined. Our reading of the text of any situation or interaction will emphasize the manifestation of that person's totality.

One of the key differences is that we will use a particular method of approaching the text, but without knowing the endpoint. This is the essential difference between the use of scripture by any social institution (most importantly, religions, although it should be said that the mystical branch of all religions have pushed the boundaries here) and the use of personal or collective text by psychology.

For entities and viewpoints structured like a religion, the endpoint or understanding of reality or soteriology is known and the scripture serves as justification for it and so must be mined specifically. For the latter, psychological use of text, the endpoint is potentially different for each reader and is unknown at the start of the inquiry or analysis. This is what is potentially creative about our endeavor but also what is potentially difficult and scary. That means that as clinicians, we do not know what the

final personality should look like - or what should happen in the meantime. Of course some psychologies do purport to know the final result. I would say that these ones have the structure of a religion instead of a psychology.

### **The Mechanisms of Projection**

Ego fragments that are too distasteful to manage will be projected onto an object in the external world. According to Jung, projections are a means by which the unconscious psyche can resist any acknowledgement of unwanted personality traits. It is necessary for one to sufficiently strengthen one's ego before attempting to integrate the disowned portions of the personality

It is important to emphasize that not all aspects of the shadow are injurious to the personality. The ego's limited point of view just makes it feel as if these fragments are detrimental. If these ego fragments are ever going to be assimilated back into consciousness, it will be important for the individual to perceive these fragments more optimistically. In other words, one's ego attitude must be altered.<sup>91</sup>

### **Some Jungian Concepts**

Complexes are energy sources or psychic elements, and if it has a strong feeling tone it may interfere with ego functioning. The complexes are autonomous entities or sub-personalities with a powerful inner coherence. They can have a profound impact on one's behavior.

Jung defines the complex as the image of a psychic situation that does not coincide with habitual conscious attitudes and which has a strong affective component.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Murray Stein, *Jung's Map of the Soul* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1998).

<sup>92</sup> C. G. Jung, *Experimental Researches*, vol. 2 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 96.

A complex is only partially under the control of the ego and at times is able to completely override ego-control and take charge of one's behavior. The more unconscious one is of one's complexes the greater the complexes' capacity to disrupt one's behavior.<sup>93</sup>

For Jung, it was not the dream that was the royal road, but the poorly paved road of the complex that leads to the heart of unconscious. Unfortunately, to the conscious mind complexes are so unpleasant that it believes that they should be eliminated. Hence, complexes are met with much fear and are avoided. Where complexes begin, the autonomy of the ego ends.

The archetype is an independent entity and a primary source of psychic energy that is found in every individual. Archetypes, as primordial images, are the inherited possibilities of human imagination, and they are the most universal and ancient thought-forms and behavior patterns that humanity experiences. Jung did not invent the concept of an archetype, and he acknowledged a number of historical figures who had the notion of a universal pattern of behavior long before he did.

Of course there is a relationship between the idea of the archetype and the Platonic ideal form, but the connections are more linguistic than functional. In *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, Jung traces the idea through Philo, Irenaeus and Augustine. Jung claims that although the idea of an archetype is found in the writings of St. Augustine, the word is not. Mythology refers to archetypes as motifs; in comparative religion they have been defined as categories of the imagination, and in the psychology of ancient ancestors they are called *representations collectives*.

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<sup>93</sup> Jung, *CW*, 2:602.

## **Von Franz and The Retraction of Projection: A Metaphorical Approach to Gods**

The psychological approach to questions of ultimate meaning, whether couched in religious, scientific, or common everyday terminology, revolves around certain epistemological assumptions.

The first is that many discussions about different ideas of the ultimate value (or god-image) devolve into irresolvable conflict. However, if they can be thought of as indicative of or results of a particular state of consciousness, we can then have a discussion about them that does not become ontological.

This epistemology engages in psychological (or soul-logical) methods, meaning that questions of ontology are suspended in favor of experiential and phenomenological data. That is, a somewhat Kantian view is taken of those things which cannot be confirmed by mutual observation (such as a religious experience). What this means in practice is that all reports of experience are seen as valid and indicative of psychological experience; all experience is assumed to be filtered through the psyche (thought of as the mind and/or neurological apparatus) and all reports of experience are seen as psychological fact. An example is that we assume that the referent of a statement about “God” cannot be confirmed whereas statements about “God” can be compared with other statements as well as with one’s own experience. Both Jung and Edinger speak of the existence and transformation of the “God-image” in this way. Again practically speaking, this means one is able to discuss religious matters without having to agree on a level of reality of belief in those purported entities.

Projection occurs, in this epistemology, as a constant in everyday life, since all ideation and even perception passes through the human psyche and appears as an image.

However this level is only important as a hermeneutic concept that allows one to remain aware of the non-representational aspect of language. Projection occurs in a more acute form when a perception begins to be less and less matched to a workable understanding of the object or situation, such as when a hatred of an alien group becomes challenged by a friendship with a member of the group, or a long-held belief in the goodness of a parent is shattered by an observation of the opposite qualities. In psychoanalysis, projection is the transference of an inner image (say of one's father) onto a different outer person (for example, one's analyst). This mechanism allows one to become aware of the qualities that are being projected and to re-integrate them.<sup>94</sup>

These mechanisms occur (or can be said to occur within one psychological model) in religious experience as well. Von Franz outlines five stages of projection and its recollection—and these five stages are all active for everyone—which allows the theory to avoid a kind of Olympian point of view toward religious experience. In other words, this approach can be taken for anything which we can identify as a kind of meaningful reality, including such things as the physical sciences. Von Franz gives the example of a man who believes a tree is talking to him. That is the first stage: total identification with tree-as-other. Next is the differentiation of a spirit in the tree from the tree, then comes a level of moral evaluation; is this a good spirit or bad?<sup>95</sup> Next comes a realization that these are “only projections” and one is typically a bit deflated, and finally one realizes that projections still come from an important non-ego source and so must be assimilated in terms of their content. This last stage allows a full integration, and therefor

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<sup>94</sup> M. L. von Franz, *Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1985).

<sup>95</sup> Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007). One is reminded of St. Teresa's determination of visions – from God or the Devil? You can tell by the results....

transformation, of the subject. As mentioned earlier, this is a theory that is applicable to political process, tribal religion, Western religion, experiences of love—really anything that has a component of psychic activation, which is to say any human activity that has meaning.

These five stages can be applied within religious hermeneutics as well, and show a gradual differentiation of the object of belief from the subject of believer, although in the end the subject becomes the object of a transformation. Again thinking about the Baptist friend mentioned earlier (p. 7) he not only gained a perspective from which to honor other faiths as well as his own, he eventually worked through something like the five stages described above, although more in the verbal landscape of Ricoeur's second naiveté,<sup>96</sup> and a few years later we had a similar conversation in which he told me that he had rediscovered his faith more deeply than ever, although it would be forever changed and was no longer "simple."

This psychological process is therefore applicable in chaplaincy in two ways. First, it is critical to people who personally are at the fifth stage in the model described above. Perhaps more importantly, it gives one a way to appreciate the reality of many types of belief without thinking that the belief should be any different. In other words, it gives a bridge or vocabulary with which to communicate to people of various stages of projective embeddedness.

This latter can occur only if the chaplain is able to have a personal experience of the five stages: that is, we all participate in all of the stages of projection/recollection with different aspects of our lives. We can, in this way, compare assumptions about justice,

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<sup>96</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970).

physical matter (which is such an embedded projection that it is hard to see it), spouses (easier to see the projective parts when breaking up), truth, religion, past beliefs, and others' beliefs.

Jung can be seen as somewhat derisive about ancient cultures and their ignorance of ideas about the archetype's location in the soul.<sup>97</sup> He describes ancient cultures mythologizing of natural processes, such as the change of seasons or the phases of the moon, as a failure to realize that they were projecting the inner contents of their souls. However we can see now that this occurs in many if not all endeavors to find meaning, and that the skill of the chaplain has to do with soul-finding (or as Hillman would have it, soul-making) in many venues. Jung further explains that precisely because the content of myth is unconscious, that is why humanity has never discovered that myth is about the soul.

The transcendent function is defined as the transformation of the personality through the blending and fusion of the conscious with the unconscious. Jung writes that the awareness and interaction with the unconscious is a formidable task which involves action and suffering. He chose the term transcendent function because it involved the rational and the irrational and because it created the connection between the conscious and unconscious. Jung describes it this way,

The tendencies of the conscious and the unconscious are the two factors that together make up the transcendent function. It is called 'transcendent' because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> C. G. Jung, *Aion*, vol. 9 ii of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. and trans., G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 48.

<sup>98</sup> Jung, *CW*, 8:145.

Furthermore,

If the mediatory product remains intact, it forms the raw material for a process not of dissolution but of construction, in which thesis and antithesis both play their part. In this way it becomes a new content that governs the whole attitude, putting an end to the division and forcing the energy of the opposites into a common channel. The standstill is overcome and life can flow on with renewed power towards new goals.<sup>99</sup>

## **Literalism**

Hillman identifies reasons for the loss of contact with the psyche, and Jung explains its impact on individuals and the Western culture. Paul Tillich uses theological language to make a similar claim. He says that biblical stories interpreted from a purely historical vantage point, which takes the stance that all events in the biblical text are literally true, is legalism, and ignores the spirit. Analytically speaking, when the psyche is discounted, a situation exists where unconscious forces in the psyche are not recognized; hence, these unconscious forces are left to potentially create pathological states<sup>100</sup>.

However I would say that each individual approaches all text of life from a moving standpoint between prose and poetry. Discerning that standpoint of the other and working with it is the key to effective chaplaincy.

## **The Question of the Symbol**

Von Franz states that a myth is a statement of regional or national psyche and it reflects the character of the nation or civilization from which it originated.<sup>101</sup> Biblical material is very much like mythic material in that regard. The need to translate the narrative with an awareness of the cultural implications appears to be essential.

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<sup>99</sup> C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, vol. 6 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 827.

<sup>100</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:208.

<sup>101</sup> Franz, *The Interpretation of Fairytales* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1996).



Her ideas for working with fairy tales must also be considered, given the cultural nature of this genre. She suggests that the fairy tale is presented in four stages: the setting; the people involved (including the number of people and the consequent psychological dynamics); the problem or crisis and how it plays out; and the climax. This is very much like Jung's method presented in *Children's Dreams* and will be one of our three basic approaches.<sup>102</sup>

### **Exegetical Considerations**

One large question with this kind of approach is how much to favor or even reference the tremendous amount of material in the various exegetical traditions. However the task of ascertaining the context of any image is foundational whether it is history, myth, dream material, or pericope. Biblical narrative arises from a particular social setting.<sup>103</sup> This may not seem like a revolutionary idea, but for students of the Bible it can be a point of contention. From an orientational point of view, context is an aspect of the image and needs to be considered non-literally. We understand that the social context of the text is part of the text, a part which reveals itself only partially, given our limited understanding of reality two thousand years in the past, but also that the context itself must be translated - for a dream example, "the house I grew up in" can be considered as a structure of psyche that was adaptive when growing up and that is now still viable, and so on.

Tiffany and Ringe suggest that a study will be more complete if the interpreter remembers that the Bible's perspective on the social context is only one of many points of

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<sup>102</sup> Jung, *Children's Dreams* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); the other techniques are amplification and translation.

<sup>103</sup> Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

view that existed. The biblical context survived because the church authorities were able to select which texts should be authoritative. Consequently, other historical and cultural points of view are valid means by which to make one's interpretation more thorough.

The second assumption, to which I have already alluded, states that the reader is reading from a specific social context. This is important to keep in mind because the reader will tend to read modern-day social conditions into the text, distorting the original meaning of the text.

The third assumption states that all of the writings do not stand in isolation of one another and all of the various readers of the text are not standing in isolation of one another either. Hence, those who wrote the texts and those who have read the texts have had an influence on one another.

Tiffany and Ringe<sup>104</sup> give a list of potential questions that might be asked when preparing to exegete the passage. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it does develop a framework to guide the translation. The following are questions to consider in all biblical study. They can each be thought of as a psychological dynamic as well:

1. What holds the passage together?
2. What seems out of place or dissonant?
3. Where are the transitions in the passage?
4. Who are the characters?
5. What is the situation?
6. What is the social context?
7. Does the author provide any commentary?

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<sup>104</sup> Tiffany and Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation*.

8. What are the important thesis statements?
9. Is Scripture or tradition offering support?
10. Are there common central beliefs on which the passage is built?
11. Are there any repetitions, echoes, or contrasts of words, images, or ideas?
12. How does the plot form, develop, and get resolved?
13. How does the passage fit in the author's literary design?
14. Is it the beginning, middle, or end of the literary piece of which it is a part?
15. How does the surrounding material influence it?
16. What would be lost if the text being exegeted was not there?

The important thing for our purposes is to think of these questions both in terms of chaplains' possible routes of exploration of personal history, and as psychological parameters within a text that point to dynamics wholly within an individual's psyche.

### **The Concept of Self**

The importance of the concept of the self in Jung's psychology cannot be overstated. Two things particularly concern us here. First, the self denotes the center of the human psyche. Importantly, the center of the psyche is not located in the realm of consciousness. Most of our deep levels of motivation and personality structure have little or nothing to do with conscious choice; rather it must be discovered, and has a just so quality about it. Jung says, "The center is not felt or thought of as the ego but, if one may so express it, as the self. Although the center is represented by an innermost point, it is surrounded by a periphery containing everything that belongs to the self."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Carl Jung, *The Undiscovered Self* (New York: American Library, 1959), 357.

The other important aspect of this concept is that experiences which help cohere the psyche or are particularly numinous are usually concurrent with certain images. These images correspond closely to ways that God has been described in both biblical and other scripture. Jung describes it this way:

I usually describe the supraordinate personality as the 'self,' thus making a sharp distinction between the ego, which, as is well known, extends only as far as the conscious mind, and the whole of the personality, which includes the unconscious as well as the conscious component. The ego is thus related to the self as part to whole. To that extent the self is supraordinate. Moreover, the self is felt empirically not as subject but as object, and this by reason of its unconscious component, which can only come to consciousness indirectly, by way of projection. Because of its unconscious component the self is so far removed from the conscious mind that it can only be partially expressed by human figures; the other part of it has to be expressed by objective, abstract symbols. The human figures are father and son, mother and daughter, king and queen, god and goddess. Theriomorphic symbols are the dragon, snake, elephant, lion, bear, and other powerful animals, or again the spider, crab, butterfly, beetle, worm, etc. Plant symbols are generally flowers (lotus and rose). These lead on to geometrical figures like the circle, the sphere, the square, the quaternity, the clock, the firmament, and so on.<sup>106</sup>

When discussing a mandala in the dream of a patient Jung writes: "The circles naturally produce a mandala, the outermost circle paradoxically coinciding with the centre, and recalling the old image for God: *God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.*"<sup>107</sup>

The presence of an authority in the psyche can be described or said to feel like the will of God or an action of uncontrollable natural forces.<sup>108</sup> Images corresponding to the Self appear in many cases to keep splits from occurring in the psyche. Because it does

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<sup>106</sup> Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, 187.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 52, 53.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 26.

perform that function, Jung concludes that some kind of unity of the opposites is the goal of the Self.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, 31.

## CHAPTER 6 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE, ANTHROPOLOGY AND NEUROLOGY

### Lakoff and Metaphor

In his work George Lakoff has convincingly shown that metaphor is behind all language and among other things shows the fallacy of a literal stance. This limit of this fallacy can be sharpened through Jung's assertion that the development of consciousness necessitates the retraction of all projections of divinity. In "Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things" Lakoff concentrates on the way people "really" think (that is, as empirically observed and tested), not the way philosophers would like them to. His conclusion: "*We use cognitive models that we acquired in childhood to solve almost every problem—to estimate, to schedule, to infer.*"<sup>110</sup> In other words, those categories are already there. What strikes me most about the cognitive science of metaphor is the possibility to apply it to many fields.

Also viewing truth as a radial concept forms the foundation for a mature relativism. Because, as we have seen, "truth cannot be characterized as correspondence to a physical reality, we must recognize truth as a human concept, subject to the laws of human thought. There are central and non-central truths. The central truths are characterized in terms of directly understood concepts, concepts that fit the pre-conceptual structure of experience. Such concepts are (a) basic-level concepts in the

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<sup>110</sup> George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About The Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

physical domain, and (b) general schemas emerging from experience....”<sup>111</sup> This concept is like the radial amplification method that Jung uses and would also fit in to a co-arising idea that is both collective, in terms of the whole network of meaning as well as individual in terms of the localized arenas and specific nodes which describe a singular human experience.

Finally in the area of a new philosophy based on language study, we can come back to Lakoff and find a very useful set of tools that correspond with the Jungian orientational view.<sup>112</sup>

### **Pascal Boyer and the Anthropology of Religion**

Religious beliefs and practices are found in all human groups and go back to the beginnings of human culture. Given the empirical evidence at hand, we must ask, what were religious beliefs about, and what were they used for. Answering these questions allows us to develop a more salient and personal relationship with the themes of the text. For example, nearly all of the usual stances of both academia and folk wisdom toward religion have been soundly refuted. When combined with the innate morality (and moral flexibility) of the human animal, a new set of thought-provoking questions arises.

On the following page is a table that gives examples of common assumptions about religion on the left and the empirical findings of anthropology on the right.

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<sup>111</sup> Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous*.

<sup>112</sup> There is no claim that Lakoff’s work contributes significantly to the philosophy of language, nor do I think it is meant to. Given Verena Haser’s work in her doctoral dissertation entitled *Metaphor, Metonymy, and Experientialist Philosophy: Challenging Cognitive Semantics* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), it is pretty clear that there are logical holes in Lakoff’s work from a philosophical point of view. However if we add the practical and therapeutic aspect of clinical work, it becomes a very useful way to look at truth, language and metaphor.

<b>We often assume that:</b>	<b>But empirical findings show that:</b>
Religion answers people's metaphysical questions	Religious thoughts are typically activated when people deal with concrete situations (this crop, that disease, this new birth, this dead body, etc.)
Religion is about a transcendent God	It is about a variety of agents: ghouls, ghosts, spirits, ancestors, gods, etc., in direct interaction with people
Religion allays anxiety	It generates as much anxiety as it allays: vengeful ghosts, nasty spirits and aggressive gods are as common as protective deities
Religion was created at time "T" in human history	There is no reason to think that the various kinds of thoughts we call "religious" all appeared in human cultures at the same time, nor that it could ever be said to be "created"
Religion is about explaining natural phenomena	Most religious explanations of natural phenomena actually explain little but produce salient mysteries
Religion is about explaining mental phenomena (dreams, visions)	In places where religion is not invoked to explain them, such phenomena are not seen as intrinsically mystical or supernatural
Religion is about the salvation of the soul	The notion of salvation is particular to a few doctrines (Christianity and doctrinal religions of Asia and the Middle East) and unheard of in most other traditions
Religion is about morality, without it we would be immoral	Humans are genetically endowed with moral principles and cultures that do not espouse a moral code are no less moral than those that do
Religion creates social cohesion	Religious commitment can (under some conditions) be used as signal of coalitional affiliation, but coalitions create social fission (secession) as often as group integration
Religious claims are irrefutable; that is	There are many irrefutable statements that



<b>We often assume that:</b>	<b>But empirical findings show that:</b>
why people believe them	no one believes; what makes some of them plausible to some people is what we need to explain
Religion is irrational/superstitious (therefore not worthy of study)	Commitment to imagined agents does not really relax or suspend ordinary mechanisms of belief formation; indeed it can provide important evidence for their functioning (and therefore should be studied attentively)

*Figure 1* Pascal Boyer, "Religious thought and behavior as by-products of brain function." Trends in Cognitive Sciences 7 (2003):119.

So if religion is not about morality, a transcendent God, social cohesion, salvation, explaining natural phenomena, or mental states; does not allay anxiety and is not irrational, was not consciously created and yet is found in every culture ever known, then what in the world is it and what might it be for?

### **Templates and Archetypes**

Pascal Boyer, in the somewhat ambitiously titled book *Religion Explained*, gives a plausible (if from my opinion, partial) answer supported by some empirical evidence.<sup>113</sup> His answer has to do with the organizing of unconscious templates in the mind and the efficiency of religious conception in the face of dramatic cognitive dissonance. After explaining each of these we can see how they fit in to a further scheme: that of uncovering some of the psychological building blocks of the mind.

The unconscious templates he describes correspond quite closely to many of the other discoveries of innate human tendencies in evolutionary and cognitive science. The presence of these innate patterns of behavior has traditionally gone by the more

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<sup>113</sup> Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained, The Human Instincts That Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (New York, Basic Books, 2001).

colloquial name, instinct. However, now that empirical experimental procedures have become subtle enough to make progress with human behavior, the word has fallen into disfavor.<sup>114</sup> The remarkable part of this for our purposes is the high correlation between these findings and the hypotheses that are emerging and Jung's notion of the archetype.

Categories charted by Boyer are animal, plants, tools, and persons. The expectations (psychological intuitions) that people are not omniscient, have a material body and function cognitively are violated by the concepts of an omniscient God, non-corporeal ghosts and cognitively non-functioning zombies. Although there are/is a vast amount of supernatural notions, there is a much more restricted set of serious ones and this is related in part to human capacities for decoupling representations. "It is certainly useful to reason away from the here and now; but that works only if such reasoning is tightly constrained. If our inferences run wild they would not provide the basis for efficient behavior."<sup>115</sup> This is also called imagination.

Boyer notes that religious concepts invariably include information that is counter-intuitive relative to the category activated. Importantly, religious concepts also prescribe all the relevant default inferences "except the ones that are explicitly barred by their counter-intuitive element."<sup>116</sup> What is more, concepts (not only religious concepts) rely on default reasoning, requiring limited variations; otherwise the prescribed inferences are too radical to be meaningful. What this means is that certain kinds of inferences about gods, spirits and other metaphysical ideas and entities *make sense* and others do not. Also

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<sup>114</sup> See Ran R Hassin, James S Uleman, and John A. Bargh, eds., *The New Unconscious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), for a brilliant if dense and scholarly treatment of unconscious and instinctual mechanisms. It is discussed below as well.

<sup>115</sup> Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 131.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

important is that in all cultures, spirits and gods appear to have an abiding interest in human morality – whether or not they share any other human qualities.

This idea of the constraints of ontic (or perceptual) categories helps inform Kaufmann's conceptualization of the orient in a similar way. A concise way to describe it would be to say that each imaginative scene is constructed according to a particular logic. Like a game, it has unique rules, and it can be judged by that logic. One of the important aspects of this is that it brings its own logical system to the table rather than having an over-arching scheme applied to it.

Boyer's assertion about cognitive dissonance, while rationally sound and plausible, does not account for a psychological reading of the results of what we might term the projection of the human mind onto the unknown.

### **Kaufmann and the Orientational Approach**

Yoram Kaufmann, in *The Way of the Image*, sketches the outlines of a hermeneutic approach that is at once practical, falsifiable,<sup>117</sup> and contextual. He derives his theory and method from a certain strand of Jung's work, one which is based on Jung's long case histories found in *Aion* and *Psychology and Alchemy*.

Although Kaufmann was not a linguist or a philosopher, this approach gets support from a number of modern sources. Since Jung did the first double-blind repeatable experiments on unconscious processes, it should come as no surprise that one hundred years later, the new science of unconscious processes continues his work.

Although in places Jung's conclusions need to be freed from the culturally specific and

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<sup>117</sup> In the scientific sense, but not often used in a quantitative way. That is, it is a theory capable of making predictions which can then be tested or *falsified*.

limited assumptions of a Swiss man born in the 19th century, many of the dynamics and outlines Jung found have been confirmed.

### **Hassin and the *New Unconscious***

As important as the experiential, and one could say poetic, thinking about the psyche is, and as much as Jung performed laboratory experiments on unconscious association mechanisms, there has not been a rigorous exploration of non-conscious mental processes until the last decade or so. *The New Unconscious*, edited by Ran Hassin (he is also a chapter author) is a book that explores recent developments in the cognitive study of unconscious processes. This promising approach takes what has traditionally fallen under a philosophical or psychoanalytic realm and puts it on empirical ground.

Hassin and his co-authors tackle questions and topics as important and diverse as “Who is the Controller of Controlled Processes,” “Bypassing the Will: Towards Demystifying the Non-conscious Control of Social Behavior” and “The Interaction of Emotion and Cognition: The Relation Between the Human Amygdala and Cognitive Awareness.” In these articles we find not just evidence for measurable unconscious processes, but we find that they are measurable as well. In “The Power of the Subliminal: On Subliminal Persuasion and Other Potential Applications” we find support for the idea that context is crucial in interpretive schema.

In the chapters “Non-intentional Similarity Processing” and “The Mechanics of Imagination: Automaticity and Control in Counterfactual Thinking” it becomes clear that unconscious pairs (similar to Jung’s concept in *Mysterium Conjunctionis*) and imagination take place autonomously, very like Jung’s idea of the mechanisms behind the complex. Perhaps more strikingly, in “Compensatory Automaticity: Unconscious Volition is not an Oxymoron” as well as “Non Conscious Control and Implicit Working

Memory: Intention and Theory of Mind” we find evidence for a level of agency that is identifiable and measurable in human mental processing, but again it is not conscious and appears only as images or results demonstrated by behavior.<sup>118</sup>

Later chapters describe a plethora of mental processes which refine or even define some familiar psychological conceptions. They deal with folk theory of mind, so important because it comprises an almost invisible level of assumption that everyone in a social cohort shares (in this case the cohort is big and important, comprising the academic and lay population of the West). We come to understand the mechanisms of how we unconsciously perceive and judge others, the arena of unintended communication and how that affects behavior, the key role of mirror neurons in all social behavior and how all of those processes happen unconsciously.<sup>119</sup>

### **Jung and Science**

We do not have to invoke a strong (and controversial) theory like Peter Berger’s *The Social Construction of Reality*<sup>120</sup> to understand that much of what we call reality is not reliably understood through a correspondence theory of language. What Jung is able to do, however, is to see how folk assumptions can be viewed as psychological realities. He declares that even if we de-mythologize much of religion or even superstition that “Whatever values in the visible world are destroyed by modern relativism, the psyche will produce their equivalents.”<sup>121</sup> In fact,

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<sup>118</sup> Hassin et al., *The New Unconscious*.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

<sup>121</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.

Instead of being at the mercy of wild beasts, earthquakes, landslides, and inundations, modern man is battered by the elemental forces of his own psyche. This is the World Power that vastly exceeds all other powers on earth. The Age of Enlightenment, which stripped nature and human institutions of gods, overlooked the God of Terror who dwells in the human soul.<sup>122</sup>

In the absence of that which religions have given to humans for ages, there is a gap or an opening. It is a gap in the sense of an experience of loss or lack, and yet an opening, because it allows for the exploration of non-ego oriented realities, though from a personal, rather than collective, stance. As Jung says, “No wonder then if the modern man falls back on the reality of the psychic life and expects from it that certainty which the world denies him.”<sup>123</sup>

### **Jung and the Modern Person: A Sliding Scale of Embedded Myth**

In speaking about the modern person, Jung is setting up one pole of a scale from archaic to modern. But this scale is in no way diagnostic in any sense of health. In fact, it is one of the beautifully perplexing aspects of Jung’s theory that the status of being embedded in a mythic container is at once wholesome, a goal of psychological process, and a kind of archaism. On the other hand, being modern in Jung’s sense is being less and less bound by one’s collective and social constraints and so gives one more freedom from automatic socially based interaction and yet entails approaching a place outside of human norms.

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<sup>122</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Indeed, he is completely modern only when he has come to the very edge of the world, leaving behind him all that has been discarded and outgrown, and acknowledging that he stands before a void out of which all things may grow.<sup>124</sup>

One of the questions often put to Jung was why, as an empirically based psychiatrist who recognized the organic level of mental illness, he valued myth—and what, in fact, he thought it was. Jung thought that all humans, and therefore human social artifacts like culture, have many unconscious levels. From this standpoint, myth could be thought of as what is real at a symbolic level. In that way, myth can be seen in the common view as less-than-true (this is from a purely conscious standpoint), but more-than-true at the level of understanding or of symbolic wholeness. Like a dream, it is real as a psychic fact and true as a symbol.

[Myths] seek to translate natural secrets into the language of consciousness and to declare the truth that is the common property of mankind. By becoming conscious, the individual is threatened more and more with isolation, which is nevertheless the sine qua non of conscious differentiation. The greater this threat, the more it is compensated by the production of collective and archetypal symbols which are common to all men.<sup>125</sup>

Jung thought that some aspects of life and experience are bigger than the limited domain of the ego. These phases of life, whether rites of passage<sup>126</sup> condoned by a social group or a religious ritual or, for the modern person, the discovery of levels of the personal and collective psyche, need to be marked in some way and experienced in a

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> C. G. Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, vol. 13 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 301.

<sup>126</sup> See the brilliant and groundbreaking book by Arnold van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 2004), as well as Victor Turner *Ritual Process* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995).

larger context than the purely personally-conscious. However, there is no way apart from problematic psychological regression (which can happen in certain conversion experiences) to go back to a first naiveté. Jung elaborates:

You cannot, artificially and with an effort of will, believe the statements of myth if you have not previously been gripped by them. If you are honest, you will doubt the truth of the myth because our present-day consciousness has no means of understanding it. Historical and scientific criteria do not lend themselves to a recognition of mythological truth; it can be grasped only by the intuitions of faith or by psychology, and in the latter case although there may be insight it remains ineffective unless it is backed by experience.<sup>127</sup>

Since Jung regards myths as the dreams of cultures, meaning that they compensate for some value or experience that is not found at the conscious level, we can also treat them as dreams from the point of view of understanding. This also means that if there are collective themes embedded in the stories, we can amplify them without regard for personal reference.

If the dream is chiefly a mythological structure, a difference which is obvious at once, then it speaks a universal language, and you or I can supply parallels with which to construct the context as well as anybody else, always provided we possess the necessary knowledge.<sup>128</sup>

And,

On the collective level of the dreams there is practically no difference in human beings, while there is all the difference on the personal level... inasmuch as he is also myself, he has the same basic structure of mind and there I can begin to think, I can associate for him.<sup>129</sup>

However when one is dealing with the conscious integration of the meaning of the symbolic contents, it is not enough to blindly go through rituals that are no longer

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<sup>127</sup> C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, vol. 14 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 528.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 529.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.



vibrant. That is, for the so-called modern person, one can in fact tell how far the material is to assimilation by its degree of mythological quality. As Jung says, “In proportion to their distance from consciousness, the complexes take on in the unconscious an archaic-mythological character and an increasing numinosity through enrichment of their contents.”<sup>130</sup>

On the other hand, as we take this material into our lives and understand it at a lived level, it becomes less and less archaic. Speaking of dreams, Jung says that “as we integrate them, they slough off their mythological envelope, and, by entering into the adaptive process going forward in consciousness, they personalize and rationalize themselves to the point where a dialectic discussion becomes possible.”<sup>131</sup>

### **The Seven Uses of Religion in Jung**

We have looked at much of the general background that informs this project. The historical-critical, the linguistic, and metaphorical traditions of biblical study have been addressed. However, much of this work is not only psychological in the deepest sense, of being a study of soul.<sup>132</sup> It is also directly indebted to Jung’s approach to the psyche, and specifically to religion. Some time must be spent describing his unique and multivalent understanding of this primary subject. He writes:

Religion appears to me to be a peculiar attitude of mind which could be formulated in accordance with the original use of the word *religio*, which means a careful consideration and observation of certain dynamic factors

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<sup>130</sup> Jung, *CW*, vol. 11.

<sup>131</sup> Jung, *CW*, 8:384.

<sup>132</sup> (As a somewhat too literal translation of the Greek *psyche* and *-ology* can be rendered).

that are conceived as powers, spirits, daemons, gods, laws, ideas, ideals, or whatever name man has given to such factors.<sup>133</sup>

We encounter religious themes and images in many contexts in our work as therapists or chaplains, not to mention in the headlines of the news. We could even say that Jung's work is defined by the use of religious terms and ideas through which he conveys various deeply experienced psychological motifs. Because Jung's religious terminology can run the gamut from highly nuanced to downright confusing, it is important to differentiate the most prominent ways that Jung uses the word religion. I am hoping that we can synthesize three different areas of application. These areas are the usefulness of this language in treating patients, the grounding of this language in our own experience, and what this approach implies about how we engage in theoretical discourse with each other.

There are many approaches to the study of religion, and all of them represent valid rhetorical modes. In fact we can treat the study of religions in much the same way that we view different theologies. They all represent valid psychological attitudes towards the numinous and each has its own internal logic. Even amongst this multitude of approaches, the importance of the topic of religion remains clearer. Whether we use Tillich's wonderful phrase, ultimate concern, or look toward the most recent studies in existential anthropology by Michael Jackson, we could define religion as that group of attitudes and behaviors that deal with whatever is essential to meaningful well-being-in-

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<sup>133</sup> Ann B. Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 90.

the-world.<sup>134</sup> From a psychological point of view however, we are constantly on the knife-edge of two completely incompatible hermeneutic perspectives.

On one side lies the study of religion: religion from this point of view is an artifact, a symbol or a discourse to examine. On the other side lies the change of experience within a particular human subject that is the very core of anything that might be called transformation. In some bygone time this might have been called the practice of religion. The former is reflective, the latter immersive. Furthermore there is a third stance which is harder to clearly demarcate, and consists of all of those assumptions, discourses, and rituals that operate in the broad and vague area of religious effect and unconscious motivation. These are things which one would not immediately think of as religious but which have a similar location in the topology of the psyche. Since in the tradition of chaplaincy we do not have access to a meditative model that might enable the exploration of states of mind that are aware of these distinctions, they remain incompatible. In fact, Jung describes each of them in different kinds of language, often first as pathology, then in another sense as essential to the therapeutics. We can try to tease out a few nuances of these differentiations as a practical clinical matter and as a prime example of the symbolic approach.

Before encountering and psychologically translating the cultural productions, rituals, images, artifacts, and concepts that we usually associate with the word religion, it may be helpful to engage in a bit of discourse analysis to see how Jung uses this central concept. We may be familiar with some of these various images from patient material or in employing the process of amplification, but this familiarity is embedded in certain

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<sup>134</sup> To take liberties to coin a Heidegger-like phrase for use in psychotherapy.

assumptions about the dynamics of meaning that can benefit from closer examination. Additionally, I want to ask how a heightened awareness of the essentially contradictory nature of the concept(s) of religion impacts our discussion of our theory, or I should say, of our multiple theories.

As an addendum to the last point, I am reminded of Sonu Shamdasani's discussion of optional ontologies.<sup>135</sup> Although I will not do justice to the subtlety of his argument, it can be reasonably mentioned that any sort of theoretical focusing lens necessarily excludes some other points of view, and therefore someone's lived reality. Thus any stance does some conceptual violence to someone. Furthermore, although Jung has mentioned that we should optimally approach each patient after letting go of all theory, this should not be understood in terms of a kind of automatic naturalness. We all begin with a bias: that is the nature of our unconscious structure. It is already there. Our only real choice is to be a conscious of our own standpoints as possible.

In the face of this need for an impossible transparency, a clear and conscious theoretical stance that has explored its own repercussions and has some idea of its limits is imperative. Every point of view sees in one direction clearly but is blind in the other. However even a clearly held and well-developed stance becomes of clinical concern when it limits the type of veracity in attitude or narrative that our discourse allows to our patients. It is possible, for instance, that some people may operate as though they do not have an unconscious. If we are true to the evidence, we have to admit that we do not know by direct experience if they do or not. One possible response might be, "those people have one, they just do not know it." However I would caution us about this sort of

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<sup>135</sup> Sonu Shamdasani, "Jung's Understanding of the Symbol" (paper presented at the Jung Psychoanalytic Association, New York City, September 2011).

conceptual imperialism even with a psychologically foundational concept—especially since Jung seemed to forego the term unconscious in his late work in favor of the word image.

From this point of view, all people are constantly trying to orient themselves (and us) in a milieu of different and even competing ontologies—as individuals within a community and as a small community within many larger concentric ones—while seemingly parallel activities of assimilation and influence play out as politics on the national and international stage. This brings to mind Andrew Samuels’ comments on the fundamentalist view; it represents an extreme avoidance of anxiety the like of which is bound to shape our own theoretical discussion.<sup>136</sup> It is still hard for clinicians to talk about their personal ways of working, and I suggest this may be because there is a tremendous amount of our god-image embedded in our theories. As Jung describes in *Aion*, any challenge to our unconscious god-image causes unbearable pain, pain which automatically triggers a conservative and absolutist attitude.<sup>137</sup> This would be a fruitful area of inquiry for cultural anthropologists that has not, to my knowledge, been utilized.<sup>138</sup>

All of this shows what is at stake and how difficult this process of discernment becomes. The conundrum might be summed up in the following critically important quotation, a text that becomes especially problematic when it becomes clear that Jung is divorcing attitude from tradition; a division which is not tenable! Jung writes:

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<sup>136</sup> Andrew Samuels, *Jung and the Post-Jungians* (London: Routledge, 1986).

<sup>137</sup> Jung, *CW*, 9ii:170.

<sup>138</sup> Martin Marty, ed., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

I should like to call attention to the following facts. During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. This of course has nothing whatever to do with a particular creed or membership of a church.<sup>139</sup>

Let me briefly outline the next few sections as we work toward understanding these dynamics as they occur in imagination, in transference, in reference to lived life, and in world events. We need to make a brief historical review of the most potent academic investigations of religion and the history of the usage of the word. Then we can look at the seven major ways that Jung uses the word religion (this is approximate, there are many shadings). We will look at each of these seven as attitudes or modes of psychological approach that can be implemented either to foreclose or to open up a particular conceptual and emotional topography. That is, each can be seen as a polarity or continuum which, taken out of context, will deliver misleading results. Let us remember that historically when Jung discussed religion both the psychologists and the theologians got upset, so we have to be careful! And yet in my opinion it is precisely in this difficult area that Jung is at his most powerful (and not coincidentally it is in this arena that the psychological approach is most necessary and fruitful).

We can then present some clinical examples for each area discussed, and cite the central discussions from the *Collected Works*. Finally, I'd like to suggest some possibilities for the measurement of where we find ourselves along the archetypal scale from fundamentalist closure to numinous quickening to explosive chaos. These dynamic

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<sup>139</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:509.

factors are also derived from Jung's clinical descriptions of his work, especially when the work revolves around something of central importance. Of course we're speaking here of the irruption of the numinous, of the god-image, of what we like to call the self. We will see if these markers can be helpful clinically or personally in giving us some kind of orientation in the foggy land of all that has been referred to or lived as religion.

We can begin by looking at the history of the concept itself: It is not very old! We usually assume that there has always been something that people recognized as what we mean when we say the word religion. This is our first exercise in optional ontology. Anthropologists have long run into confusing situations when they have asked tribal people about their religion or their rituals or beliefs. They would have had the same problem in London in 1550; the modern concept had not yet been born. In fact, the word came into being (see John 1:1) at a certain measurable moment.

In its current form, the word "religion" and the use of the plural "religions" first appeared in 1593 (in Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie*). Hooker divided religions into 4 categories: Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan [*sic*], and pagan. This conceptual format remained in use for more than a century. It was not until 17th century that the concept of religion emerged as an abstract set of qualities apart from concrete historical traditions. This is not to say that thoughtful people did not contemplate gods and demons and human systems of interaction with them before this, but rather that the question had been couched in terms of whose gods, which power, and to what effect, rather than calling into the question the realm of the supernatural altogether.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> This is true whether we think of Democritus, Newton, or the alchemists.

This is a critical moment, comparable to the Copernican revolution (which was cited by both Jung and Lacan in describing major changes in consciousness).<sup>141</sup> Before this moment religion did not exist. It was like the old example of the awareness of water to a fish; it cannot be present in awareness because it is the context for everything else. It is important to note that the psyche occupies this same topographical position today. Perhaps we could say that the archetype lay dormant in an unconscious matrix—it did its job behind the scenes. But then something happened. The textual evidence shows that certain writers started to become aware of the level of lived mythology that allows the possibility of the conceptual world.

This paradigm shift<sup>142</sup> showed up in various ways in philosophy, literature, economics, and the movement of populations. One of the great voices of this shift was Friedrich Nietzsche, who was inspired to say: god is dead.<sup>143</sup> We can hear this trope as evidence of the tearing of the fabric of reality, as the changing of a certain kind of organizing assumption about reality (which had been called God), or in Jungian terms, the beginning of the need for a new archetypal dominant. However, as our first quotation from Jung shows, Nietzsche turned out to be quite wrong about any demise of the powers of the divine. Instead, as Jung has claimed and as has been amply born out, the gods and spirits live on with different names, names that refer to political agenda, to mental health states and to psychological theories—including our own. And of course they live on in the ongoing search for whatever it is that we project on the word “meaning.”

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<sup>141</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (New York: Norton, 2007).

<sup>142</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

<sup>143</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vantage Books, 1974), and also *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Dover, 1999).



## **The Academic Tradition**

We can begin our brief survey with the psychologist William James and his seminal work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In the Gifford Lectures (1902), James defined religion as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.” Obviously, this definition is too limited; religion is more than affect and more than what people do in their solitariness. However this statement does point out the terrifying and unavoidable fact that we can never know another’s experience, in its totality, ever.

On the other side of this point, William Newsman pointed out: “regardless of what else may be said of religion, it is also a social phenomenon—it is something that people do in groups.” Jungians refer to this as the collective aspect. Mircea Eliade (himself a Roman Catholic historian of religions), rejected the study of religions solely from psychological or sociological perspectives and examined the patterns or forms of religious expression. We might link that to Jung’s insistence on a phenomenological approach. Eliade emphasized the differentiation of conceptions of sacred and profane, and recognized that religion has the capacity to transform the profane into the sacred.

Another pillar of early sociological thinking about religion, Max Weber, popularized the definition and concept of “cult.” The categories include: a charismatic leader (and being dead is no impediment to this role), a secret language, a process of initiation, a special act or ritual, and a sense of being different from the norm in a way defined by the previous categories.

The Protestant theologian Paul Tillich was himself an ally of things conceptually Jungian and emphasized the subject’s accessible internal experience. He wrote of religion

in terms of an “ultimate concern” within which he would include secularism: “For secularism is never without ultimate concern.” He also wrote about the importance of doubt in the exploration of the ultimate concern. Jung agrees in the following:

People who merely believe and do not think always forget that they continually expose themselves to their own worst enemy: doubt. Wherever belief reigns, doubt lurks in the background. But thinking people welcome doubt: it serves them as a valuable stepping stone to better knowledge.<sup>144</sup>

Going back to the collective approach, the sociologist Emile Durkheim linked religion to the concept of “church:” “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”<sup>145</sup> Obviously, this definition runs counter to the recognition of the ascetics who express their beliefs outside of a community, but shows us the powerful collective identity created by sharing values and actions.

The psychological factor in all of these approaches is that concern can appear in many forms, which intersects nicely with a methodology that translates any subject-text into symbolic dynamics. That is to say, no form of religion or reflection or lack thereof can claim any sort of primacy—it all gets to be translated.

Into this struggle for definition, others have introduced a number of special terms. For example, Rudolph Otto, in *The Idea of the Holy*, produced a battery of Latin terms that suggest aesthetic dimensions in religion. He wrote of human confrontation with the “numinous,” which is “wholly other” or outside normal experience and which is indescribable, terrifying, fascinating, characterized by dread and awe. The experience is

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<sup>144</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:124.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

of a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, an “awe-filled and fascinating mystery.” He wrote of the *numen tremendum*, which refers to the sense of the uncanny or that which renders a person “awestruck.” Otto associated all of these feeling responses with aspects of religion and which Jung, of course, built upon for his approach.

Two objections come to mind. One would concern reification, and the likelihood that most people experience a *numen tremendum*. If this is our healing modality, then we deserve any marginalization we get, since we would do better to form a monastic community (which would be fine with me, but would marginalize many). But also we are forced by common sense as well as our psychological perspective to ask how is this different from the experiences expressed by, for instance, astronomers moved by the immensity of space? Or by poets and artists as they contemplate the wonder they experience in everything from nature to human technological creativity? Furthermore, how are these feelings different from those experienced while falling in love, bearing a child, or anything approached with, in Suzuki’s terms, a true beginner’s mind?

No less powerful than the beautiful experience, are the horrible: the shaking of the earth during an earthquake or violent storm, the violence of domestic dispute or warfare, the injustice of birthright. And finally of course we have to acknowledge the feeling that comes with a new awareness or the connection of symbolic elements. These are human aesthetic responses to the wonders of our cosmos.

### **Commentary on the Historical Review**

After perusing a century of thought about religion, we are probably no closer to a definition. This is one factor, although the less important, in why Jung spoke of religion as an eternal problem. That is, it won’t be solved by us, today or ever, because it is the problem of meaning as an archetypal polarity whose roots disappear into the psychoid

reaches of the psyche.<sup>146</sup> In using the word eternal Jung also refers to a dynamic and a-temporal center of meaning that will remain imminent but never exhausted. In fact, if a statement about the psyche looks too declarative, it is probably one-sided—a statement that includes this argument as well.

These descriptors could be used in reference to how we feel about Jung, about our work, or sometimes, what happens in our work. Jung pulls it together this way: “We might say, then, that the term ‘religion’ designates the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been changed by experience of the numinosum.”<sup>147</sup>

This gives us our first practical clue to unwrapping the orient of this passage: we can begin our explorations (like the prologue in Exodus 20) with what has already been changed in our subject’s life. This is also the psychological purpose of a patient’s historical reference: it shows the dynamic and transformational factors that have already been relevant and so are active in the current moment. Relevant here is Jung’s radical shift of the traumatic moment from the past to the active and dynamic present.

That is, memory is not a recording of a putative past, but is rather a way of speaking about and usually justifying a current attitude. The official history of any religious tradition serves the same purpose: it is a way of legitimizing the current position and dynamic effect of an institution as well as revealing its archetypal formulation.

From this point of view we could say that the numinous is that dynamic factor that catalyzes change. However if the changed situation is reified and identified as

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<sup>146</sup> Jung uses the word “psychoid” to mean the hypothetical experience permanently below consciousness.

<sup>147</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:6.

statically valuable, this leads to a discourse of fundamentalism, that is, a foreclosed or non-symbolic attitude.

### **Salience**

Jung thought of this conflict as a deep crisis in persons and nations. Historically it manifested in the destruction of a Victorian and Enlightenment naïveté (and other symptomatic solutions) by the inexplicable brutality of WWI. We can often see a similar brutality in the elimination of a naïve world-view by the necessities of adult life.

But, archetypally understood, what was happening was that the ability of the current mythology to contain our collective experience was collapsing. When no longer adaptive, any set of assumptions refuses to remain peacefully embedded. Gods were becoming symptoms: but they did not go away. Their energetic dynamics were taking on new forms, but critically, the collective and personal ways of dealing with them were not keeping up! As Jung points out in Vol. 10, much as we would like to think so, we are no less superstitious than were the Greeks—those savages!

We have to remember that the salience of religious belief developed over many thousands of years. We should also keep in mind that before it was called religious belief it was simply transparent reality. Neurosis in large part is due to a shift in our understanding of both spirits and referential systems of meaning: now we are partly without both and are scrambling to make up for that. Of course at the same time we are as individuals and groups still mostly unconscious, instinctual, and automatic, which on the plus side gives us some good social habits! Contra Freud, it is the unconscious which holds us together socially and the monster of consciousness which threatens the peace of restful ignorance.

## CHAPTER 7

### JUNG'S MULTIPLE USE OF THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION

In his difficult late work, *Aion*, Jung attempts to describe what both the conscious and unconscious structures that define the edges of our reality look like today. He defines it this way, “The highest dominant always has a religious or a philosophical character.”<sup>148</sup>

The description of the seven (or eight!) ways Jung uses the term religion can be thought of as levels of discourse within the analytic container, as modes of experience, as types of mythopoeisis, or as functional descriptors in a formal model. In my view, it is the prerogative of analysis to operate as if patients do something religious when they walk in the door, whether they would name it as this or not. This is an assumption I am comfortable with: the discourse reverberates with ultimate concern regardless of the content or affect. Furthermore, you do not have to be a fan of Studs Terkel to notice that the language people use even for an ultimate concern is typically not overtly religious. Although this is a topic for another time, Jung mentions that for most people, speaking and even dreaming of religion has more to do with sexuality (and vice versa) than anything we will now describe as religion. The relevance of this is due to the status of most experiences of church or temple in modern liberal America: it is the abode of social morality and thus stands in some relief from desire.

The seven ways that Jung uses or understands the concept of religion begin with an essential description of an anthropology, that is, as a definition of humanity. Jung,

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<sup>148</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:6.

in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, describes humans as Homo Religiosus. By that he means at an essential level we are the meaning-seekers.

He goes on to talk about some derivations of religio, including a “respect for what is sacred, reverence for the gods,” an “obligation, the bond between man and the gods.” Of course in both of these we need to ground the concept God or gods, and for Jung this has to do with God-image and the idea that those forces which inspire or move us are bigger than our personal consciousness. Jung also makes a lot of the etymological line through ligare or “to bind, connect,” probably from a prefixed re-ligare, i.e. re (again) + ligare or “to reconnect.” St. Augustine, in *Confessions* also makes this connection which is further elaborated by Joseph Campbell. Cicero thought of it as connoting “to choose,” “go over again” or “consider carefully,” all of which are relevant for our purposes.

This activity is the core of who we are, and we seek meaning through the psyche, which is defined in *Aion* as will influencing instinct. That very effort is religious. But this does not necessarily refer to what you say you are concerned with; rather it is what is concerned with you. That is, it shows up in how you are, who you are, and what you are, and of course as what crosses your will. But just to complicate this religious notion of psyche Jung writes that “It is as if we did not know, or else continually forgot, that everything of which we are conscious is an image, and that image is psyche.”<sup>149</sup>

In speaking of this realm at all we become susceptible to the subjective problem that faced the psychological pioneers at the turn of the last century. Briefly, it means that any psychological theory can be eviscerated by just claiming that it is in some way merely a mirror of the psyche that made it. This moves the dialogue to the fundamentalist

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<sup>149</sup> Jung, *CW*, 13:75.

plane, eliminates the possibility of dialogue, is unnecessarily ad hominem, and worst of all, does not advance our knowledge. The fact that it is also sometimes more truthful than we would like does not lessen its danger. When Jung related this dilemma to James, he famously responded that our only recourse is a sound moral compass and a degree of common sense. Trumped by American psychologist Mark Twain: not common.

So, we are that creature that makes meaning—which also means we will make false meaning, have inauthentic fantasy, and suffer the famous inauthentic suffering. All of the this we could call neurosis, which Jung further deepens by showing that the very form of the inauthentic will also contain the way to the authentic. This confuses non-Jungians and Jungians alike. Sometimes we call this dynamic a symptom, sometimes, a symbol.

Jung manifested this split when he went back and forth between declaring himself a champion of phenomenology while engaging more or less simultaneously in self-described “confessions of faith” when speaking of his theory.

This first area of meaning-making already illustrates three levels of tension. First, the polarity of the image of ultimate concern (we could say the image aiming toward the self) is a deep conflict that affects us daily, that is, it is a problem of moral conscience. Furthermore, you cannot study religion without destroying a kind of naïve or automatic religion. Clinically this often appears as a parental or relational idealization that comes to pieces just by carefully looking at it.

Next, religious concern (if we think of it as meaning-making) does not show up as religious imagery in our patients. “All the old gods were psychological facts which later



on became ideas.”<sup>150</sup> This means that if we are to look at the modern version of the religious attitude, for instance, Jung advises us that it is important to “observe their attitude toward that which changes them, for better or worse, then we know just how it is that they pray.”<sup>151</sup>

Finally, the facts that we can safely speak about are general ones, necessary for formal models and any kind of communication but without the hot libido of personal experience that is typically what moves us in one direction or another. So the very plasma of change is foreclosed by the necessity of communication.

Second, Jung describes religion as a descriptive language—it is rich and alive! Religious language shows us another multivalent evocation of psychological terms: possession, conversion, worship, God Almighty and so on are powerful emotional terms for common experiences.

Perhaps the best example is the use of the word complex versus the phrase “possessed by a spirit:” the former is dry and intellectual whereas the latter brings up images affect and a whole dynamic of struggle and the loss of free will. Indeed Jung finds that the religious descriptions of many kinds of experience to be far superior in these deeply descriptive ways than the modern terms of science.

This is a form of mythopoeic or metaphorical speech, but why speak in metaphors? It is in order not to kill the concept, but to keep it alive. As Jung writes in *Dream Seminar* “it is an abbreviation for a very subtle kind of experience...”<sup>152</sup> This

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<sup>150</sup> Jung, *Seminar on Dream Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 181.

<sup>151</sup> Jung, *CW*, 18:244.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

indicates that the metaphor is not vague, rather it has clinical repercussions and has both an exactness and an aliveness crucial to understanding the other.

Furthermore, Jung challenges us to be phenomenological, rather than ontological, and he does this through the type of speech one uses. Is it adjectival or nominal? Do we use the word religion or speak of qualities of the religious? As Hillman mentioned above, do we speak of the soul or concern ourselves with living soulfully? Clinically, we are always charged with trying to describe a dynamic or rather than conferring a title. He is trying to develop and to promote an ability to be more embedded in our experience, more descriptive and more mythopoeic.

Third, religion also appears as dogma. Versions of dogmatic usage include dead and lifeless words, but ones that contain the structure and history of the alive—if we can use a symbolic attitude.

Of course if this dead language is clung to, then the results are really bad! Dogma versus living experience: First conundrum—Jung equates this to a primitive experience, and a discussion of his use of the primitive takes us far afield. But we can certainly say that in other places he means the energy of being oriented and the passion of being drawn to what is interesting. Clinically: the story of the past—it is dead, but it is the structure of the present and points to the future.

For Jung, religion is also the most important thing. For one thing, we all have and experience that which is called religious. There is no one who is not religious. This is also referred to as the dominant aspect or value in the psyche, “Religion is a relationship to the highest or most powerful value, be it positive or negative. The relationship is

voluntary as well as involuntary, that is to say you can accept, consciously, the value by which you are possessed unconsciously.”<sup>153</sup>

Another way to say is that it is to understand that “That psychological fact which wields the greatest power in your system functions as a god, since it is always the overwhelming psychic factor that is called ‘God’ ...As soon as god ceases to be an overwhelming factor he dwindles to a mere name.”<sup>154</sup>

So we try to fend this off by saying: I have such and such a desire or habit or feeling of resentment, instead of the more veracious such and such a desire or habit or feeling of resentment has me. Then there is the question of mastery; it is not that we should serve, it is that we do serve already: but what?

The “principalities and powers” are always with us; we have no need to create them even if we could. “It is merely incumbent on us to choose the master we wish to serve, so that his service shall be our safeguard against being mastered by the ‘other’ whom we have not chosen. We do not create our God, we choose him.”<sup>155</sup> We are constantly engaged in the psychology of religion as well as the religio of psyche.

Clinically, the self is manifesting constantly regardless of the knowledge or relatedness of the patient or analyst: it is getting what it wants; the person is already serving something. Religion is also the projection of ontology—it indicates meaning and wholeness.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Jung, *CW*, 11:137.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Jung, *CW*, 18:244.

Religious symbols, although they represent beliefs that cannot be proved, give meaning to life and establish our place in the universe. Of course where this belief has faded, many people ask analysts questions that were once reserved for theologians. But like dreams, the religious questions do not show up this way. So for instance if we ask a patient how they are religious, most would wonder about our sanity or flakiness, but if we observe their attitude toward that which changes them, for better or worse, then we know just how it is that they pray.

In the face of the unknown, projections actually are ontology! All gaps in our knowledge are filled by projection, and projections are the source of new adaptation and self-knowledge.<sup>157</sup>

We know that activated unconscious psychic contents first appear as projections but gradually are reshaped into conscious ideas. Jung points out that the denial of this mechanism, in which projection and perception can be worked with is dangerous not only to an individual in whom this denial becomes neurosis, but also in nations where collective delusions take the form of destructive mass psychoses. Insanity after all, is a possession by an unconscious content that cannot be assimilated into consciousness, especially when the very existence of the other is in question.

As a question of absolutes, here we question our own ontology. But in this regard we question ontology in general in our role as clinician.<sup>158</sup> Jung speaks of why he is not Catholic, even though in his mind the Catholic Church still carries the most comprehensive transmission of cultural symbols. First, he is a practical Christian to

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<sup>157</sup> Jung, *CW*, 13:29.

<sup>158</sup> Jung, *CW*, 18:645.

whom love and justice mean more than dogmatic speculations that are unprovable. Second, he is a doctor who could not help his patients if he believed he possessed ultimate truth. Third he is a man of science who does not believe that what he himself believes or understands is the only and final truth. Jung as usual points inward: one cannot come to terms with this conflict by imputing wrong to someone else but rather by solving it within oneself.

To put this another way, in a letter Jung states that “God has never spoken to us except in and through the psyche, and the psyche understands it as the eye beholds the sun.”<sup>159</sup> Clinically this can come in lots of forms: our insistence on the presence of the present/non present symbol, or as the patient’s projection on the therapy or on something else entirely.

Religion can be thought of as the containing mythology.<sup>160</sup> This is like the water to fish metaphor I mentioned earlier: whatever containing assumptions we live by are what give us an orientation. But the modern person for Jung is the one who has begun to see the water. This is both the loss of collective structure and the opening of the possibility to relate to it and discover a (more) personal one. One word for that process is individuation. There is some debate within the analytic community about whether individuation is a modern phenomenon. Jung is a complex enough thinker that arguments can be found in the *Collected Works* that support either side. Although Jung does mention that there were major cultural reorientations with the advent of the scientific method and

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<sup>159</sup> William McGuire, ed., *The Freud/Jung Letters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 98.

<sup>160</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 153.

again with the coming of psychology,<sup>161</sup> he also mentions that the process of individuation can be thought of as merely an accelerated process of maturation.<sup>162</sup> He finally mentions that the process had never been seen before in a way that could be described psychologically – thus implying (consistently with his view of culture) that the process itself was as old as the advent of the psyche itself but that the understanding of it had taken a recent turn.

The central image or value of the containing mythology could be called the god image. As mentioned in *Aion*, if this stance or foundational value-laden assumption becomes questioned or threatened, the subject becomes highly disoriented and suffers such intense pain that any sort of structuring element is grasped, whether it is genuinely part of the subject or not.

But if the mythology has contextual container is alive then all is well, and clinically we should hesitate before popping any projective bubble. This is especially true since from this point of view there is no absolute truth that is vouchsafed to the person of the clinician. Rather there are methods of understanding the subject's psyche that indicate when some layer of projection is in need of correction.

I hope it is clear that the difference between projection and perception is subtle and determined by the needs of the image itself. It should be remembered that nearly all studies from the field of anthropology of religion show that religious people (those that live by a creed) live happier lives, have better relationships, and suffer less anxiety.<sup>163</sup> In

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<sup>161</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 140.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>163</sup> Besides the classic studies by Studs Terkel and Robert Bellah, there is now extensive research from many groups. See "The science of happiness," reported by Mike Rudin, BBC, April 30, 2006; and Pamela Paul, "The New Science of Happiness," *Time*, January 9, 2005.

his essay on psychotherapists or the clergy Jung advises that these people be referred to the appropriate expert in their current ontology or mythology. God help the clinician who pops a religious bubble without a replacement of equal authority, equal depth, and equal life.<sup>164</sup>

The spiritual crisis of post-World War I Europe showed up in the emergence of psychology as a field of study, and is also the result of the loss of a mythic structure with which to contain and express the needs of the soul. In the past a living religion provided this. This allowed the psyche to appear outside of man and psychological problems were reduced to a minimum.

For Jung, World War I shattered the illusion that some kind Christian peace and harmony could be attained, not to mention that cataclysmic psychic forces could be contained. Worse than that, it destroyed humanity's faith in itself. In a sense it was the final blow to the possibility of a viable modern religious container that began with the coining of the term "religion."

The only choice left was to confront the unconscious psychic forces, which resulted in a quest for knowledge that led to a rediscovery of parapsychology, spiritualism, Eastern thought and astrology. Even internationalism, what we could now call globalism, and the renewed interest in the body are parts of this quest. It is interesting that Jung places psychology among these other manifestations of the quest, as again we are confronted with the theme of our art being poison and panacea. Psychology itself is the symptom of the disease.

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<sup>164</sup> Jung, *CW*, 10:74.

Also it brings home another point that is always a little upsetting: that our search for knowledge is the same thing, on the reverse side, as the dissolution of collective structures of meaning. Clinically we see this occur because, in general, it is not happy people who spend the tremendous resources necessary to gain even a small foothold in the topography of their unconscious realms.

On the other hand, what do we make of the fact that an AP poll reports that 78% of Americans believe in literal angels?<sup>165</sup> Or, According to the Pew Research Center, the one thing which would ensure that you were never elected president would be to say that you did not believe in God.<sup>166</sup> Or for that matter of a country whose president has the literal ear of the divine?<sup>167</sup> Pascal Boyer, in his wonderful, if ambitiously titled book, *Religion Explained*, explains the unconscious salience of these things in a way that shows the narrowing gap between cognitive evolutionary psychology and our archetypal mode.<sup>168</sup>

Jung speaks of yet another gap, the gap between faith and knowledge which brings up the need for a new personal philosophy. The question of a philosophy of life only arises when conditions of existence change so rapidly that a tension between outer situations and inner beliefs is created. That is, the dominant mythic structure is no longer adapted. For Jung, neither religions nor rational philosophy resolves this tension; rather it

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<sup>165</sup> [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201\\_162-57347634/poll-nearly-8-in-10-americans-believe-in-angels/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57347634/poll-nearly-8-in-10-americans-believe-in-angels/).

<sup>166</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/us/government/politics-religion.html>.

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/oct/07/iraq.usa>.

<sup>168</sup> Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained, The Human Instincts That Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 78.



is the analyst who must attempt a readapting of the primordial images (reading the symbolic content) that in Jung's view maintains the critical flow of instinctive energy.

When Jung talks about the crucifixion of the modern person, he means we must take a stand and have an orientation while simultaneously knowing it is not the last word! Our work is to begin to see our unconscious assumptions, even though this is a necessary task, yet an impossible goal. The point of this task is that it leads to a different way of being and relating to others. Jung also thought of religion as the center of the numinous. Jung said, "I do not need to believe in God, I know." Luckily he explains this a little:

[This] does not mean I know a certain God (Zeus, Yahweh, Allah, the Trinitarian God, etc.) but rather: I do know that I am obviously confronted with a factor unknown in itself which I call 'God.' It is an apt name given to all overpowering emotions in my own psychic system, subduing my own conscious will and usurping control over myself. This is the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans, and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse.<sup>169</sup>

We are engaged in developing a new theology from within, while knowing it is symbolic, practical, useful, and flawed all at the same time. Our theory is perhaps our primary way of orienting to and working with the numinous, and so it too becomes imbued with a kind of theological aura.

Our theory is the magnet of the wise, it is what orients us in the field of our work and also what attracts the ferrous material; that is, the fragments of the self in ourselves and our patients, it is therefore the prima material as well as the finished lapis, it is our work and yet is based on our personal peregrinatio, all of this together is what makes it so precious and so heated. Our privilege, our duty, and our danger is that we do not shy away from numinous core that makes us who we are as scripture translators.

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<sup>169</sup> *Face to Face*, "Interviews with Carl Jung," BBC television, 1959.

The question is one of identification versus information: if we see some theory or theological construction as a story that we relate to, that helps us to understand ourselves, then there is no ontological supremacy posited. Whereas if we think the way that we have stumbled upon is the way, the truth, and the light, it disallows other possibilities for ourselves or others, in our clinical practice, in our personal lives, and in our community interaction. Conversely, if a text does not reveal the way, the truth, and the light, then it is not useful for transformation.

### **Development of Theoretical Considerations**

We have to ask how to tell the difference between an ontic theory and one that remains related and *in relationship with* the textual and clinical material. The following is a chart based on seven possibilities of differentiation derived from the previous material. This is a kind of rough and ready checklist that is no doubt incomplete but can be considered as a starting point. One could also think of these seven items as kind of a scale of religious attitude. Or we could say they represent a continuum of foreclosure versus opening to the other.

A worksheet to determine psychological relevance:

1. Does a theory *increase our information* or decrease it? Reductive theories, or statements of jargon typically decrease the information available (while widening the scope, they are a kind of generalization.)
2. Imagination: Does a theory activate the imagination and potential possibilities? Mark Solmes has written that the same area of the brain is

activated in dreaming, in fantasy, in imagination, and in planning creative approaches to challenges arising in the future.<sup>170</sup>

3. Energy: an understanding of the symbol increases the energy available to ego processes.
4. Surprise: Information theory tells us that the signal can be differentiated from the ground by its surprise value.
5. On the negative side: If your theory or attitude always gives you the same result, you are engaging in what Jung called the *petitio principii*, which basically means that you have a tautological model incapable of correcting itself, and so although perhaps parroting a firm stance, it is in fact the reverse of any sort of differentiated accuracy.
6. Nesting non-scalar symbolic densities: meaning that the dynamic pattern that the clinician uncovers should be identifiable at different levels of discourse with the same affective value.<sup>171</sup>
7. Click of assent! That's not agreement, but it does mean that the clinician has found the language of the other, the timing and a level of content accuracy sufficient to make a true communication.

We have circled all the way around this term, this activity, this attitude that we call religion. At the same time it functions as a signifier of essential human-ness, as dogmatic demand that forecloses relationship, as descriptive language, as desire in the

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<sup>170</sup> Mark Solms, *Brain and the Inner World: An Introduction to the Neuroscience of the Subjective Experience* (New York: Other Press, 2004).

<sup>171</sup> This is a term coined by George Hogensen and taken from the language of physics, reported in Pramila Bennett's *Cape Town 2007 Journeys, Encounters: Clinical, Communal, Cultural. Proceedings of the Seventeenth International Congress for Analytical Psychology* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon, 2009), which is a compilation of the triennial Jungian international conference July 1, 2009.

form of ultimate concern, as the projection of ontology, as the reality (which we call mythology) that contains all else, as dark and light numinosity, and as the curing attitude itself. This is a virtual circulation of the analytic process itself, and yet the dynamics appear not only in that rarified environment but every day within each of us, in our families and in the world.

## CHAPTER 8 THE TRANSLATIONAL TOOLS

### The Tools Themselves

#### **An outline of critical concepts**

- Since symbolic material appears in its own language, we have to translate it into psychological dynamics and then into a description of behavior in order to understand it and therefore to understand and do justice to the process involved.
  - Jung's *Children's Dreams* shows us just how we can literally make a sentence of images and plug in the correct meanings to create a powerful descriptive sentence giving us a psychological profile unique to this person.
  - *Children's Dreams* gives the best introduction to Jung's three-part interpretive scheme. He outlines the concepts of radial amplification, narrative analysis, and translation. The last is the least used and most incisive aspect, so that is what I am stressing in this brief manual. The other two must, of course, be included in any thorough dream work.
- Jung informs us that although theoretically infinite, in practice we find a limited number of typical motifs (or instincts or archetypal patterns) at work in the majority of people. In fact there are only about seven major themes, the key ones of which we know as Mother, Father, Shadow, Anima/us, Trickster, Wise Old Woman/man, and self. This is should come as a relief! (For instincts see Vol. 8 par. 232, for patterns see Volume 9i and *Aion*, for the technique see *Psychology and Alchemy*, for amplification of a single theme see *Mysterium Coniunctionis*)

- Typical motifs help us to clarify our thinking and to see the general situation of the subject (this is the correct use of categorization), while the details of the image help us identify the unique and individuating factors within each collective modality
  - The collective aspect of the unconscious indicates that psychological dynamics are the same for a given symbolic image with a given context (this is derived from the idea that language must have a collective component or no two people could remotely communicate, and Jung often uses the metaphor of psychic anatomy. However that the application of this dynamic to an individual is wholly dependent on personal factors and with cultural contexts accounted for).<sup>172</sup>
    - An example is the dream of the man smearing shit on the wall, discussed in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. It is a kind of trick scene as most people react to the shit on the wall. However the key translational factor was that he was not in any way conscious of his shitty relationship with his unconscious, rather than the appearance of the shit itself, which has a proud history of often being the location of an essential part of a transformation.<sup>173</sup>
1. Method 1: Identify the Setting/Orient: translate this to a psychological starting point
    - a. The point of this is to identify the general psychological area: the parent's house would indicate a parental complex; a ship at sea indicates a psychological crossing, and so on. It establishes the normative expectations/guidelines.
  2. Method 2: Identify the narrative structure:

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<sup>172</sup> By this he means that although all of our personal organs are unique, each one has a primary function that is just the same as the others. For example, all stomachs are designed to do the same thing for all humans – but how they do that is individual.

<sup>173</sup> Fecal matter is often the site of, or even *is* the hidden gold seed in alchemical lore.

- a. Look at the image as a dramatic structure (Setting, Development, Crisis, Lysis): What is the crisis? Who are the characters as aspects of the person's psyche?
- b. Within the inherent guidelines, does anything stand out?
- c. Identify the psychic dominant and the related radicals
3. Method 3: Amplify using the radial method
  - a. In circumambulating the empty center, what are the layers of synchronic radii that fill in our understanding? Think of behavioral, scientific, mythological, transferential and narrative aspects.
4. Method 4: Translate the image into psychological/functional language
  - a. For example, two brothers wrestling in the parental house shows a situation of conflict within the parental complex. It is where one 'lives' so to speak.
  - b. [A good exercise is to then translate this into a DSM category, a Freudian defense, and an Object-relation. You can see how each model implies different treatment.]
  - c. At this point you can easily determine the overall orient.
5. Ground the image: Where does it appear in lived life; Where does it ring true?
  - a. Where does this occur in various ways in the subject's life?
  - b. Also ask yourself: where is it in my own life? Live the image or it is dead.
6. Develop the moral imperative: What new choices does this information offer?
  - a. This is not social morality; rather it is the weight of freedom.
  - b. If gnosis/understanding/liberation has occurred the subject acts, and is different.
7. Prediction and correction: make a psychological description, check the next image.
  - a. Describe to test your understanding of his/her unique imaginal language.

- b. Enhance your exquisite attunement as the way of meaning/healing.
  - c. Develop a diagnosis and prognosis of the image (always for the present.)
  - d. How is the symptom, as symbol, true symbolically for the future of the person?
  - e. The diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment direction should be clear now.
8. The intervention, transference and timing
- a. What aspect of the image shows you what to say, how to say it, and when?
  - b. What does the image say about the therapeutic relationship?
9. Mantras (helpful clinical shorthand)
- a. "A psychological image is always true." But how? In what way?
  - b. "Finding the orient releases the energy of the image." If taken in.
  - c. "Exquisite attunement reveals the vector of intervention." For the clinician.
  - d. "Compassion is understanding." And orientation is its manifestation.
  - e. "All material is symbolic." For the therapist, not the subject.
  - f. "Always explore the fantasy behind the affect. "All trauma is in the present.
  - g. "Strong or sexual transference indicates lack of attunement.



## **Biblical Themes**

We will be tracking these (and other) themes throughout the biblical narrative, and we will see them as propensities of the human psyche in the west:

1. Creation and creativity: How does the new appear? Does it appear as though from within or from without? Self-created or other-created?
2. God: understood as God-image, that is, the relationship with the highest in conscious or unconscious structure, or as the concept of the law of our beings, our conscious relationship with that, as well as our relationships with people in the light of the highest value (this highest aspect is almost always unconscious. In fact one might suggest that healing has to do with becoming more conscious of this psychic center of gravity and agency).
3. Death and meaning, the future, the promised land, judgment, apocalypse and the end of time.
4. Sacrifice—and especially the development and psychological grounding of this concept, covenant, the call, prophets, son-ship.
5. Angels, devils and the inhabitants of the celestial realm.
6. Sin, atonement and redemption.
7. The feminine and wisdom, the coniunctio.
8. We will notice that as the text unfolds the very image of God changes.  
  
Psychologically speaking, what does this mean?
9. What is the role of humans in creation? Why were our conscious beings made, from the point of view of the total personality?

## The Text: A Methodological Move

Since this method evolved for clinical use and since the chaplains are also involved in a clinical application, an example drawn from a therapeutic setting may help clarify some of the applications of the above principles. We can then move to an example derived from biblical text and finally, to a more sustained treatment of the text and how it can be approached in both personal and clinical settings. In all cases we endeavor to employ Occam's razor<sup>174</sup>, and Jung reiterates this in his own way. Jung claims that this method should not be overly complicated; in a letter he states,

My empirical standpoint is so disappointingly simple that it needs only an average intelligence and a bit of common sense to understand it but it needs an uncommon amount of prejudice or even ill-will to misunderstand it, as it seems to me.<sup>175</sup>

Jung also makes it clear that symbolic texts of different sorts give us a diagnosis, a prognosis, and a treatment plan. If we can take him at his word, we have a powerful tool, one that has not been pushed to its full potential. Jung claims that "It is in the way of dreams to give us more than we ask...They not only allow[ed] us an insight into the causes of neurosis, but afford[ed] a prognosis as well. What is more, they show[e]d us at what point the treatment should begin."<sup>176</sup>

Although this quotation mentions dreams, his idea of the symbolic process is based on the falsifiable principles found in the Word Association Experiment (WAE)<sup>177</sup>—and Jung never abandoned these principles. For Jung there are three major

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<sup>174</sup> Occam's razor! Also known as the Principle of Parsimony.

<sup>175</sup> McGuire, *The Freud/Jung Letters*, 573.

<sup>176</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 5.

<sup>177</sup> Jung, *Word Association Experiment*, vol. 4, *CW*.

sources of psychological data—the WAE, dreams, and active imagination. The foundational stance that lies under the WAE also applies to the practice of dream interpretation or the more subtle practice of active imagination. The latter are seen primarily as more efficient ways of interacting with the psyche and following its energy—they are in no way different *sui generis*. All three techniques are aspects of the same process, although the two faster techniques are always more prone to mistake, which is why we cannot lose sight of their more basic forms. In noticing that there are multiple ways to approach an image we approach a sort of gradient of treatment as well, one that is based on the implications found in the image itself.

A clinician often notices that the very genre of discussion resembles one of these processes more than the others. The WAE experiment, for example, manifests the greatest conceptual division between analyst and analysand. The doctor is doing something specific—asking questions, noticing the rhythm of response, including memory lapses and of course association. Dream analysis is more mutual—there is a sort of objective text that the analytic dyad can work on together, while active imagination is the most fluid and deeply interactional. Of course the above are ways of describing the sense and flavor of an ongoing dialogue rather than being highly discrete moments or techniques.

A key conceptual approach to understanding a given image in its context is to think in terms of function. That is, we can ask what a particular image or item in a symbolic setting actually does and in this way come up with its symbolic equivalent. Jung discusses just this technique when explaining the meaning of different tools—they extend the ego's functioning as a psychic apparatus in just the way that the tool would

extend bodily functioning. This approach eliminates the problem of whether a given image is liked or disliked at the level of ego-consciousness. This is what Jung means by psychic objectivity: each image is looked at as an event or phenomenon indicating a process, rather than as something that the ego must have chosen and therefore might shoulder the blame.

Jung's understanding of the *vas bene clausum* (that is, the frame of a treatment, including confidentiality of whatever kind is appropriate for the setting) also supports these conclusions; everything we need to determine a diagnosis and prognosis as well as knowing how and when to use a particular analytic intervention is found within the image. Additionally, the guidelines for the understanding of a particular clinical situation, be it a transference comment, a snippet of personal history, or a dream narrative, are derived from the context itself. Without a dynamic conception of the *vas*, no symbolic interpretation is viable.

Furthermore, the guiding information is not only in an image derived from the unconscious, but also within any symptomatic presentation—if seen symbolically. Jung quotes Holderlin to point this out, “But where danger is, grows the saving power also.”<sup>178</sup> Jung also puts it in less poetic terms saying, “The psychological trouble in neurosis, and the neurosis itself, can be formulated as an act of adaptation that has failed.”<sup>179</sup>

The clinical repercussions of this approach are varied and far-reaching. This demonstrates some of the basic techniques of finding the context and essence—that is, the orient—of an image and of applying it clinically. Again, “symbolic” is understood

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<sup>178</sup> Jung, *CW*, vol. 10.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 574.

here as the attitude taken by the analyst toward the image, which is itself seen as any part of a patient's manifestation, whether it shows up as a dream, a bit of dialogue, a behavioral pattern, or a memory. That is, this rendering of image does not privilege any particular rhetorical style or type of communication by the analysand. Whatever happens in a session, if understood through the concept of the orient, is a manifestation of and communication by the total personality. It is the therapist's responsibility to learn and understand this unique and symbolic language of the patient.

Importantly, we will also see how predictions may be made from within the method in order to have a falsifiable and correctable technique. This possibility of correction has strong implications for the transference/countertransference dynamic and provides a new way to think about so-called frame issues. If the transferential dynamic is conveyed by the image itself, then an orientational approach may be taken which circumvents the trap of personalization. That is, it becomes clear that what the patient responds to is the role of the therapist, rather than the person who is doing the intervention. The quality of falsifiability allows this theory to engage in the rhetoric of emergence as well as to avoid the logical tautology that seems to have been a hallmark of 20th century psychological thought. As Jung put it,

...the psyche is so infinitely diverse in its manifestations, so indefinite and so unbounded, that the definitions given of it are difficult if not impossible to interpret, whereas the definitions based on the mode of observation and on the method derived from it are—or at least should be—known quantities.<sup>180</sup>

This quotation allows us to differentiate the term “methodology,” which refers to a set of assumptions about the dynamics of the psyche, from the term “technique,” which

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<sup>180</sup> Jung, *CW*, vol. 18.

refers to specific interventions taken in a given clinical setting. A consistency with the first does not indicate a sameness of the second—the chaplain’s technique should be specific to each patient, and based upon his or her unique psychic language, and this can only be derived from within a consistent methodology.

A careful examination of Jung’s various clinical examples throughout the *Collected Works*, and his three major case studies *Aion*, *Psychology and Alchemy* and *Symbols of Transformation*, as well as *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, enables the formulation of the method outlined above. Looking at the clinical examples, I tried to differentiate what Jung actually did with the image itself from what he was trying to accomplish in the essay overall. Jung’s use of each essay, while important in understanding Jung’s historical aims and the development of his theory, can distract the reader from the details of specific operations which come out more clearly if they are clearly differentiated.

*Mysterium Coniunctionis*, on the other hand, presents a variation on this methodology, in which the specific details and unique configuration and context of any pair of opposites determines the procedure best for the situation. That is, it reveals a robust and flexible clinical method that allows conclusions to emerge wholly from within the patient’s particular image. One of the goals of this thesis is to mine Jung’s work (as well as relevant material in the fields of hermeneutics and linguistics) for a methodology that might mitigate what I see as the three of the four great limitations of current theory: the hermeneutic of suspicion, the reductive method, and the analyst-as-knower.<sup>181</sup>

This approach also addresses a few concerns that I have run across in the current literature and in the training of candidates at our institute, the Jungian Psychoanalytic

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<sup>181</sup> The fourth is the difficulty with measurable outcomes – which is a different sort of problem.

Association, New York (JPA). First, we have the problematic use of psychodynamic vocabulary, all of which implies a different, essentially non-Jungian psychological dynamic and structure of the psyche. Although this discussion does not need to be lengthy for the purposes of this project, it is still important to differentiate between the hermeneutic of suspicion that is the basis of any psychodynamic model and the model presented here.

For example, let us consider some important words in the lexicon of traditional psychodynamic theory like “defense” or “resistance.” The appearance of these words in theoretical dialogue must refer directly to a repression-based and therefore non-symbolic and non-prospective view of the unconscious. This is because, from within the dynamics of the analyst-as-knower, the analysand<sup>182</sup> must be he or she who does-not-know. Therefore, any disagreement with the opinion of the analyst shows a lack of insight and a lack of courage in avoiding the difficult but always true words of the analyst. That is, the patient is being defensive.<sup>183</sup> Jung did not use these terms in favor of a simpler notion. If an analysand disagreed he had to assume he was either incorrect or at the very least did not time his comment well. After all, a capable analyst always sees more than can be assimilated by the analysand, so the question of just what can be assimilated in the current dialogue is on the shoulders of the analyst. So we can see the use of these terms as attempts to mitigate Jung’s deepest notions of the psyche as prospective in nature, in

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<sup>182</sup> *Analysand* is the somewhat awkward Jungian attempt to find a better word for the subject of analysis than patient – which is too medical – or client – which is too transactional.

<sup>183</sup> For a masterful explanation of this process, see Anna Freud’s *The Ego and The Mechanisms of Defense*, rev. ed. (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1979). It is a powerful work, but one which relies ultimately on our three negatives: the hermeneutic of suspicion, the reductive method, and the analyst-as-knower.

favor of a common psychodynamic model in which folk psychology and attempts to control the flow of psyche predominate.

### **A Clinical Example of Translation in the Analytic Setting**

This section will present a brief clinical case. It begins with the dream of an analysand – without any other identifying information. Of course this will seem out of context without corresponding biographical information, and that is indeed the point. We are trying to lift up a bit of authentic text from the unconscious, so to speak. Of course any text is already a translation since it is obviously in a particular language and has been formed into a narrative – when dreams often present themselves in ways which do not directly correspond to the assumed waking reality of the subject. However we are attempting to get to a terrain with fewer interpretive markers – perhaps we cannot hope for their elimination, but it does present a very different exercise in understanding and even in predictive methodology. There is not an evolved vocabulary in this arena which is why some of the concepts seem quite foreign at first.

Probably related to this issue of vocabulary is the lack of examples of applied orientational methodology in the literature. This paucity of clear clinical examples may be what seems to push clinicians to resort to the concepts of psychodynamic traditions for grounded clinical models. Many times I have heard therapists in training say something like, “Translation and methodology is all well and good, but what do we say to someone, in the consulting room or hospital bed, who is suffering?” Point well taken, so let’s have a look at it: let’s take the beginning of an example, in this case, a dream.

#### **The Analysand’s Dream**

I am in exotic Africa; I must be on some sort of trek. It is exciting, but I am thirsty and hot, and I am not sure where I am. I come to an oasis and



there are all these hippos in the water. It is really amazing. I think it will be like swimming with the porpoises, and decide to go in.

Aniela Jaffé<sup>184</sup> told me, quite a long time ago and before I really knew what it meant, that Jung used to give out a small dream like this in his seminars and ask right away: who dreamt it? Can you describe the dreamer, including the gender, the age, the main psychological problem, the likely solution, and even the parental influence? The participants were expected to derive all of this from the dream snippet – and of course their answers were testable! I am grateful that Jung's volume, *Children's Dreams*, came out recently, since it shows a similar teaching style, as well as how he might actually accomplish all of the above. Although we should not make hard and fast conclusions from this, it does demonstrate that there is within the Jungian tradition a way to make subtle and verifiable predictions.

We can immediately begin from this point in the narrative, knowing nothing more. We can make a (general) diagnosis, prognosis, and we can think about where to make a comment, as well as begin to develop a description about the personality of the dreamer. Of course one would need to check one's conclusions both in a series of dreams and through other symbolic and biographical information, and we're going to do just that. However, making this bold attempt is also just what allows our nascent clinical understanding to be falsifiable. When I have asked training candidates to do this, they have often started with something quite safe, like, "I'd ask how the patient felt about this or that..." This is of course usually fine (though not always, and more to the point conveys a general lack of understanding of symbolic process). But once they get the hang

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<sup>184</sup> Jung's biographer and personal assistant, a renowned analyst in her own right.

of reading the orient and taking a chance with it, things really open up both for them and for their patients.

In any case it is important to remember that we all do just this—that is, make assumptive conclusions—all the time. We have done it already, mostly unconsciously, as we build up a hypothesis about a patient (or anyone; this stance is taken from solid empirical evidence<sup>185</sup>) from subtle cues that we read subliminally or through intuition. The method proposed here makes that process more accessible, more checkable, and less susceptible to our subjective stances, social pressure, or the whims of recent theory. It is important to remember that this method makes full use of all of the therapist's psychological abilities and functions. Some people have incorrectly attempted to single out one function as the best for deep understanding and communication, but every intuition must be grounded in the sensate, and thoughts go nowhere if not fully invested with affect.<sup>186</sup> After all, says Jung, "Nothing influences our conduct less than do intellectual ideas."<sup>187</sup> As mentioned above this methodology also eliminates the use of the concept of the psychological defense—and it has been used mostly to insulate the therapist from the objections of the patient. Jung again: "*Let us not forget that '...when a patient seems confused, it does not necessarily mean that he is confused, but that the doctor does not understand his material.'*"<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Hassin et al., *The New Unconscious*.

<sup>186</sup> Description of Jung's four functions, Jung, *CW*, vol. 6. Also see the Meyer's Briggs assessment tool, the most used and confirmed psychological tool in the world.

<sup>187</sup> Jung, *Modern Man*, 42.

<sup>188</sup> Jung, *CW*, 8:172.

Some might argue that there is too much of an emphasis in this model on being right and indeed the point is not to establish a bulwark based on insurmountable evidence, but instead to dare to have some conclusion clear enough that one may check one's assumptions. This is in order that any kind of therapy or communication can move ahead in a way that is constantly in a dialectic with the patient.

Also, in my opinion, it is often necessary to make a statement on behalf of the "monologue of the self" as Jung puts it. Furthermore he asks: "Is there anything approaching a reliable criterion for the correctness of an interpretation? This question, happily, can be answered in the affirmative."<sup>189</sup>

Let me outline, in simpler terms, the pitfalls of not using both the context and the essence of an image to uncover its specific compensating information. If we take a structural and normative approach, one which is perhaps epitomized by Marie Louise von Franz (I am thinking primarily of her amplificatory studies such as her work on the cat and the tree<sup>190</sup>), we head in a Platonic direction. This provides us a system, a means of assessment, a theory of collective patterns as ideas, and an approach to diagnostic criteria according to norms (which, being statistical concepts, are similar to archetypes).

As Jung famously says, "On the collective level of dreams there is practically no difference in human beings, while there is all the difference on the personal level."<sup>191</sup> However, there is an obvious problem here. If we use only a collective lens then any conclusion will suffer from a lack of specificity and a reliance on some process which remains too heady.

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<sup>189</sup> Jung, *CW*, 7:281.

<sup>190</sup> M. L. von Franz, *The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1999).

<sup>191</sup> Jung, *CW*, vol. 7.

Obviously the difficulty, if we set up this example as an extreme case or a straw man, is that we cannot help but see the archetypes as unchanging and hegemonic. This would leave out the critical relevance of the individual (especially considering Jung called the process individuation<sup>192</sup>) and furthermore, all relevant criticisms of structuralism, from the Marxist/feminist to the modern Žižek-ian, apply here as well.<sup>193</sup> The end result of applying this method exclusively is that one eventually ends up with a kind of “dream symbol book” mentality which is inaccurate, altogether too naïve linguistically, and leaves no room for the dynamic play of the psyche.

On the other hand we could attempt a full return to the other extreme of some un-reified dynamic emphasizing flow and process. This would mean letting the images proceed on their own, in a devil-take-the-hindmost way. With an emphasis on process only, we may open up avenues for new psychic energy<sup>194</sup>. What is more, in the hands of a charismatic person, in this case an analyst—with perfect integrity and having undergone a complete personal analysis—this may end up well, since the understanding of the constraints of any process would have been lived by the person of the analyst. Of course the odds are not in favor of this occurring very often, and perhaps more relevant, it does not reveal a theory that one can discuss, teach, or evaluate. This is similar to a very old discussion between religious experience and religious tradition. *How can we find a way to simply follow the image from within its own context and let it show us its parameters?*

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<sup>192</sup> For a discussion of individuation, refer to Jung's *The Undiscovered Self*.

<sup>193</sup> The reading list here is gigantic and leads to an even more difficult discussion of Jacques Lacan. Although this is an important area (that I wrote my M.Div. thesis on), the most relevant begins with Slavoj Žižek, ed. *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2003), and runs through his *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

<sup>194</sup> This is the realm of Hillman and the mythopoeic process.

Furthermore, how can we find a way to teach that approach? “If only simplicity were not the most difficult of all things. It consists of watching objectively the development of any fragment of fantasy.”<sup>195</sup>

We see that the “flow only” sorts of approaches, even in the hands of a genius, end up with a kind of anything goes mentality, in which there can be no comparative diagnosis because there is no statistical norm. The emphasis on norm may sound limiting, but human activities are always bounded by limit on one side and openness on the other. Not only that, all of language and anything we may speak about intelligibly refers to a collectively held and conditioned reality. Even in understanding the social aspects of mental health issues (see below), there is still an important set of skills which navigate this level of reality. Otherwise we are left open to a reliance on so-called, ungrounded, intuition. In many instances this reliance becomes an excuse for doing whatever one wants under the guise of it feeling right.

Obviously both of these options are quite different from using a method of understanding the image which finds hints about what to say in a way that is derived from the context of the image itself. Interventions may then be applied according to the essence of the dynamic as found in the narrative and extracted through the principles found therein.

Everything we do, each part of the clinical interaction and all aspects of symbolic theory, should be based on what shows up in the patient’s material and applied according to the context. We can call this material, as Jung does, the image, but as mentioned above

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<sup>195</sup> C. G. Jung, *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, vol. 7 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 20.

I emphasize that this refers to a total presence of emotional, associative, behavioral, historical, and verbal communication.

Another benefit of this method is that it gives us a way of speaking about and exploring common images that may occur in a patient's dialogue without in any way rupturing the container of the work. In this case, we shall explore the essential thing about a hippo in order to determine its psychological translation, that is, its function in this dynamic. In wondering about any discrete aspect of a situation in terms of its unique signification, we do not reveal personal history or individual dynamics. Furthermore, in thinking about this so-called essence, we could say many things about the image of a hippo, but only some of them would be unique and specific to it and not to anything else. Once we close in on the specifics of hippo-ness, we can then open the image back up by looking at mythic and historical amplifications, and finally at the context in which it appears. The same is true for a biblical phrase, pericope, or image.

Another example of how this method applies might be the rules of any game or sport, or for that matter the universal grammatical structures of language.<sup>196</sup> In all cases these rule sets appear to be totally arbitrary on the surface, and yet they are completely authoritative within the unfolding drama of a particular game or linguistic situation. Even below that, the variability of types of games or the development of patterns of language acquisition appear to happen within narrow confines. They cannot be made up or changed during play, and they appear to be outside the origin of any particular player while playing that game.

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<sup>196</sup> It is not necessary to be a follower of Chomsky to see that there are tightly constrained ways that humans learn language – nor are these ways independent of culture or education. In short, they are inborn.

Jung gives us a direct indication of how this might be done:

I learned to follow the lines already indicated in the material presented by the patient and in his disposition, rather than commit myself to the general theoretical considerations that might not be applicable to that particular case... It all depends on when I am able to learn the language of the patient and to follow the groping of his unconscious toward the light.<sup>197</sup>

### **The Dream Translated and Tested**

Let's take the same dream again, and look at how it plays out in our method, and then in a therapeutic session, along with some amplification:

I am in exotic Africa, I must be on some sort of trek. It is exciting, but I am thirsty and hot, and I am not sure where I am. I come to an oasis and there are all these hippos in the water. It is really amazing. I think it will be like swimming with the porpoises, and decide to go in.

Here we have a simple statement from the unconscious of the patient. How we look at it will have strong clinical implications for our understanding of this person and for the treatment. With the appropriate modifications, we will be able to use this kind of reading for other kinds of texts as well.

First let's take a slightly exaggerated "follow the flow" technique. We could ask what the dreamer thinks of the various parts of the image, or how it feels. We could ask about historical associations. These correspond to narrative or personalist understandings of scripture, or historical and political explanations. If we wanted clinical direction, in terms of whether or not to "dive in," we could go with the idea that the dreamer "knows" that the situation is not dangerous because it did not feel dangerous in the dream. Of course in terms of hermeneutics this can only be a kind of eisegesis. This all leads in a particular direction in clinical treatment. In this case, it leads to "going in" whatever that

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<sup>197</sup> Jung, *CW*, 7:195.

means in a clinical context, or it might be encouragement to “go in” for whatever associative parallel the patient comes up with. One might be tempted to say, “Dive in!”

From my point of view, however, this approach does not address the a priori aspect of the image. After all, it would not matter if the dreamer had dreamt of kittens in the water or killer whales, since the clinician would go with the “feeling of safety.” We also do not get any sense of what the psyche is doing with the complex; Jung points out that complexes themselves are easy to find, but what the psyche is agenda might be through them is much harder and more important for us to discern.<sup>198</sup> In a biblical application, we would have to avoid the tendency to take the text literally, morally, or personally; hence Jung’s emphasis on the objective (meaning objectively in the text, not in “reality”) aspects of the God-image. He saw that it changed over time, and like a key piece of personal behavior, that change is motivated from sources not accessible to the conscious mind. This understanding gives us a very different sense of how to understand and interact with different layers of our own meaning-system.

On the other hand we could take a more mythological stance. This is an example of amplification—which as mentioned above, is nothing more than applying philological techniques of translation to images. Hippos loom large, so to speak, in Egyptian mythology and in African folk tales. This would help fill out the total picture. We could also translate some of the images into psychological language. For example, we could decide that the water is the unconscious—after all, Jung says it “is the commonest symbol for the unconscious.”<sup>199</sup> This would be a crude and naïve use of psychological

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<sup>198</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.

<sup>199</sup> Jung, *CW*, 9i:40.



translation, since it would be treating the image of water as a sign. In fact, by merely substitute one vocabulary for another, this would undercut our whole project. However, if we dig into why Jung makes this statement, then we come to the functional and dynamic parallel, which is very close to Lakoff's understanding of the embodied and coherent aspects of metaphorical language.<sup>200</sup> Without going into great detail, we can compare ancient views of the ocean and water from mythic and tribal cultures, we can examine the gods of the seas and of watery places and we can note that ocean water is "deep," "unfathomable," "dangerous," "the source of life," "shrouded in darkness," (at least beyond the shallows) and so makes a rich metaphor for aspects of human experience that begin close to us and end up at some conception of majestic source.

Similarly, we can consider the hippo. The hippo might remind us of the Venus of Willendorf, or we could refer to Tawaret, the consort of the god Set, and go with some sort of mother. We'd still want to know what clinical direction is being indicated. But what if we try to look at the image more precisely? Jung says: "To understand the dream's meaning I must stick as close as possible to the dream images."<sup>201</sup>

It might be important to know about the hippo itself in its own environment, especially since this dream is set in nature, rather than in a zoo or in some other collective container such as a television show or a mythic narrative. Each of those contexts retains its own set of implications or constraints. This model does not privilege one over the other, but does emphasize coherence between rule-sets. For instance, in the setting of the hippo's African natural habitat, the hippo is thought of, along with the lion and Cape

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<sup>200</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003).

<sup>201</sup> C. G. Jung, *Practice of Psychotherapy*, vol. 16 of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. G. Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

buffalo, as the most dangerous animal in Africa. It habitually attacks and kills crocodiles that get close to its young, and it can move with stunning speed in the water (as well as up to twenty-five miles per hour on land, luckily for short distances only). If we take this into consideration, that is, if we take the specific aspects of the image seriously, then it is clearly a very bad idea to approach the apparently refreshing water or the numinous object represented by the hippo.

We know that as the material of the psyche is assimilated by the ego at a lower voltage, or in more mundane aspects, the dream will become less archetypal. This indicates that the meanings and associated attitudes and actions will become more accessible to the consciousness of the patient. In speaking about unconscious symbols, Jung reminds us that, "...as we integrate them, they slough off their mythological envelope, and, by entering into the adaptive process going forward in consciousness, they personalize and rationalize themselves to the point where a dialectic discussion becomes possible."<sup>202</sup>

We might also notice that this dream is structured like the well-known dream in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*,<sup>203</sup> in which the protagonist kills a giant crab with the wave of a magic wand. To Jung this shows an obvious lack of maturity, as it is a typical pure situation, that is, a magical solution that involves no appreciation of the task or any change in attitude for the protagonist. It is not a coincidence that these descriptions are apropos for this dreamer.

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<sup>202</sup> Jung, *CW*, 10:384.

<sup>203</sup> Jung, *Modern Man*, 7.

So now we can attempt a description of this personality. The dreamer is drawn by the numinous—which is of course prognostically promising, but which at this moment in his process must remain foreclosed. In fact it deserves careful distancing. How many young enthusiasts have successfully navigated the Scylla and Charybdis of passion and restraint? So we can expect, or at least we would predict from this vantage, various forms of well-meant bad judgment. Most likely he will exhibit fascination with things that appear on the surface to be exotic as well as a tendency to get in over his head through misrecognition.<sup>204</sup> In terms of clinical direction, should the analyst dive in, we can expect destructive chaos to ensue.<sup>205</sup> Diving in could take many forms, from encouraging flights of fancy to encouraging whatever those magical things might be in lived life.<sup>206</sup>

The radical and prospective view of this image indicates that indeed a relationship with a giant mother complex-cum-archetype is needed for his spiritual thirst to be quenched, but, as Jung says (mentioned above), it will only be possible in a more personalized and rationalized form. Critical to this approach is the maintenance of an attitude that translates symptomatic and complex behaviors into their symbolic forms, but without negating what they mean and what they are after, so to speak. This latter part is key since, “They’re after all attempts of a future personality (whose partial aspects they represent) to break through.”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Although a bit off the subject, Lacan’s work on the development of ego functions through misrecognition is very similar to this.

<sup>205</sup> Jungian analysis has a well-deserved bad habit of not knowing when to apply the reductive forms of analysis.

<sup>206</sup> This should not be confused with the chaos indicative of the emergence of the *prima materia*.

<sup>207</sup> Jung, *CW*, vol. 10.

If we look at this dream through the understanding of projection, we remember that each psychological intervention is specifically indicated by an evaluation of the attributes and interactions of a given pair of opposites. This comparison can be along many thematic lines: it can be one of temporality, degrees of divinity, natural elements in opposition, presence and absence, and so on. The degree of difference between the opposites and the difference between the meaning of an image and the understanding of consciousness shows the distance between this content and its possible assimilation by the subject. In this case we see a huge divergence between the dreamer and the hippo, between his understanding and the message, and between the sense of “where he lives” and the scene of Africa itself.

So let’s test this and amplify our conclusions into family dynamics, his narrative history, relationship patterns, masturbation fantasy and so on. In the session after the dream, he reported:

Getting here today was harrowing. On the way a number of young men threatened me and I had to run to the bus (Not sure who they were?). They were a bunch of kids with yellow and black handkerchiefs. I remember joking with them about their lack of fashion sense, but they got mad at my joke and came after me. I ran to the bus stop and got away.

Thinking back on his presenting problem: his idea of himself was as a victim, but with high spiritual aspirations. “‘Bad things keep happening to me, why?’ ‘All I really want is enlightenment’. ‘I wanted to work with a Jungian because of the archetypes; they are the center of everything’.”

Later he tells a story about a Tibetan Tantric meditation technique that he read about and tried. He had a bad reaction that “freaked him out” and caused a lasting emotional upheaval. We can see we are confirmed in our thinking about this young man. He is romantic and idealistic, but immature. He has genuine interests but bad judgment

and a lack of ability to follow through. In and of themselves, these are not personality traits that need to be corrected. However the images themselves, that is, in our conception of the psyche, his own process is putting the pressure on. This autonomous quality is what keeps this process from being a socially conservative one. His process might in fact have gone in another direction—and the therapist would be constrained to follow it.

After a number of years of what can only be called slow and painstaking analysis and as his numinous impulses are slowly assimilated, he brings in the following dream:

### **The Golf Dream**

I am playing golf, which I am not that good at, but I like it. I am on the third tee, and I cannot find a tee for my ball. It is frustrating, although there is someone carrying my clubs. I am a little anxious about the time as I see a foursome coming up behind me.

As opposed to the dream of the hippopotamus, we can see this image as showing a clarity of purpose that was not evident previously: it is as if the image is indicating that now he has to make his play. In many ways this dream is totally different from the last, as he is within “bounds” of the course, and the rules of the game are much clearer. The image shows a situation that is much closer to consciousness, since he actually does play golf, so unlike “wild Africa” the inner lexicon is likely to be as familiar as the outer. Furthermore, he has a guide in the form of a caddy, and although he is experiencing frustration, not only is it relatively minor and can be fixed with help from the assisting function, frustration and the ability to work through difficult situations are hallmarks of a maturing personality.

There is an experientially accurate sense of being slow (in his development) as a quaternio<sup>208</sup> closes in on him from behind—the side of the unconscious. As might be expected, he has become much more grounded in his life and has begun the pursuit of the numinous in ways that can actually be assimilated and related to, such as a long-term relationship and the soul-growing benefits of paying work.

We can see that finding the orient (that is, the understanding of the context and essence) of an image conveys both a diagnosis and prognosis, while the application of the dominant image gives us a particular technique for the individual, as well as a way to correct a clinical misstep in the most Jungian way, that is, at the behest of the image as it emerges from the psyche of an analysand.

This method allows us to use a consistent methodology—only in that way can we be corrected by the psyche. We can then explore the unknown patterns of meaning and life that extend from the familiar present into the unknown future. This way it is possible to have a leg in both the known and the unknown, to have a rigorous and repeatable approach that yields nuanced and differentiated treatment styles and outcome paths for each subject. We can make sense of the collective and conservative nature of the concept of the archetype as well.

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<sup>208</sup> Four-part figures are very important to Jung and in the history of mythology, though they can be left out of our method if they seem too much based on assumption.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT: CLASS, USAGE, REFLECTION**

#### **Notes From the Class**

##### **The Text of Genesis: An Example of the Method in Use**

The previous chapters represent the thinking behind this project as well as some of the implications of its clinical use. Much of this material was brought into the class setting itself in different ways: didactically, through reference to sources, and in live group dialogue as the chaplains wrestled with the material. It is now time to relate some of the process of the class itself and the types of learning involved. Therefore it should be noted that there were three or even four very different kinds of challenges involved, the combination of which required an extremely high level of application by the students.

The first level of learning was purely at the level of the text itself. For some, this was a first pass at much of the material. For others, this was the first time the text was read with the idea of developing thematic strands that run through the entirety of the work. Next, the tools had to be learned and applied. As mentioned previously, this has to do with a suspension of theological and even cultural interpretation, along with adopting an assumption that this material is vitally important and even completely true at the level of the psyche. One could almost say that this nearly impossible feat was the single most challenging aspect of the class. It is structurally very similar to deep analytic listening.

Applying this attitude to the text engendered many levels of self-questioning amongst the class members. It spurred a level of creative interaction with their own psyches that I was gratified by as well as proud of, because it indicates this material and

method are challenging on so many levels. For some, this personal level remained the most important, and their change in clinical insight was based on a new self-knowing. Some of this resulting change is apparent in the portions of student feedback inserted below. For others, the next level of direct application of either this new listening skill or a direct scriptural reference was the main accomplishment. Either way I witnessed what can only be called soul-making in progress.

As the class goes on, the students' ease with the method and material increases, reaching a high point with the book of Job. Although we did make a pass at the New Testament as well, the chaplains were engaged in writing their final papers and no weekly reflection papers were due. Still, as can be seen from some material culled from their papers, certain students were very taken by the parabolic material in Luke and the gnostic side of John. It should be noted that from this point on, the style and form change somewhat. This section is partly about the communication of the method and attitude described above, partly a loose transcription of classes as they unfolded, and partly a selection of portions of the weekly reflection papers written by students. What I hope to show is the progression of the students' understanding of this viewpoint through their own words. Due to all of these factors, footnoting will necessarily be sporadic and the verbal style more casual.

Each of these small chapters represents a section of the course. Most were two or three weeks long. Job, however, took over a month due to some class cancellations because of hurricane Sandy and our group Zen retreat, which proved to be a highly meaningful coordination of text and world events. The style changes in this section as well, and each sub-chapter begins with some of the concepts that I used to orient the



students and which could help them to focus on certain themes. I also would give a short example, some of which are recorded below. Then as a group (and in the weekly reflection papers, which are quoted in part as well) we would struggle with and discuss the methodology, the themes, the translation, the personal impact, and the clinical application and relevance. Finally I would comment on the class material and the papers, giving us an ongoing feedback loop with a number of dimensions.

### **Class One: Genesis**

We are going to start at the beginning. Why start with the beginning? What do we assume is the beginning? Just to ask these questions is to challenge some foundational assumptions—including the idea that some assumptions are foundational!

The word genesis can be defined this way: Old English Genesis, first book of the Pentateuch, from Latin genesis, adopted as title of first book of Old Testament in Vulgate, from Greek genesis “origin, creation, generation,” from *gignesthai* “to be born,” related to *genos* “race, birth, descent” (see *genus*). As such, it translated to Hebrew as *bereshith*, literally, “in the beginning,” which was the first word of the text, taken as its title. Extended sense of “origin, creation” first recorded in English c.1600.<sup>209</sup>

Traditional, modern, and ancient exegeses are legion. References can be found in the course syllabus. You can peruse the huge literary landscape if you are curious, but for the purposes of this class, a certain naiveté might be an advantage. So we can question, in an experiential and contemplative way, the categories of origin, creation, and generation, as well as race and birth. The text gives us important information about how these themes have been expressed through the symbolic language of the psyche.

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<sup>209</sup> Online Etymological Dictionary, <http://www.etymonline.com>, s. v. “origin,” “creation.”

We are going to circumambulate the text at first, and then look at the narrative. Let's remember our method as we go. This will be a counter-intuitive mode of inquiry. It will not quite line up with any interpretive or theological stance that you are used to, and that is because we are trying to see the text as the *unfolding of the collective psyche*, which makes it invisible most of the time. Here is our translational outline again as a reminder:

- (1) Read the story just for familiarity – this assumes a frame of beginning and end as well
- (2) Identify the context
  - (a) This step is critical as it allows the reader to understand the internal assumptions or rule-set with which to evaluate the narrative.
- (3) Look at the narrative aspects closely –
  - (a) Identify the characters and translate them into psychological aspects
  - (b) Identify the high point(s) of the story in order to find the crux
- (4) Find the patterns, if any
- (5) Amplify
  - (a) This refers to the philological tool most commonly used for translation of an unknown word or language. That is, one lines up similar texts to compare the meaning. In this case, we will look for similar patterns as well as for alternate interpretations from different levels of biblical criticism as well as different theological approaches. Both are seen as psychological entry points.
- (6) Now we can finally translate the text into a sentence that conveys psychological meaning

If we think about the Hebrew, we notice that *bereshith* is translated as “In the beginning...” One way to amplify this is to consider how it was used in the tradition of the Kabbalah. Here we get a sense of the imaginal approach that we are trying to replicate

and which has been around since Philo of Alexandria. Following their example, if we look at the literal word order and meaning we see that something happened “inside” the “beginning.” The beginning was thought of as Sophia, the aspect of Wisdom. So there was pairing of God and Wisdom that was contained by Wisdom itself in the generation of the cosmos. You can see the kind of precision, scope, and creative endeavor we are going for. The next step would be to wonder what personal experience or psychological description this would correspond to.

For a more ample amplification we can consult a variety of works on creation myths, the two most useful of which are Primal Myths and von Franz’ Creation Myths. We can then ask such questions as: Do they all begin at the beginning? And are some cultures not so interested in the beginning? If we remember the chart that describes Pascal Boyer’s findings, it is clear that not all cultures, in fact only a minority of them, are concerned with origins in this way.

We can also look at some of the grammatical differences that are embedded in different translations, all of which are valid. For example, the same text can be translated as “in-beginning, God created...” This use of a verb-clause changes the meaning dramatically.

We can notice as well that Freudian and current trauma theory start here, with a discrete event—or one should really say, with the fantasy or assumption of a discrete event. A folk understanding of religions begins here as well. Remember the trope of “religion” as an explainer of natural phenomena and other big ontological questions pointed out by Boyer—who then shows it does not actually perform these functions at all, at least not in all cultures.

So how might we ground this concept in our own experience? We can ask: Where do we begin in any situation? Why do we start at “the beginning”? These are narrative assumptions, not experiences in the moment. They have emphasis on past and origin and source, not on character or process or futurity. We have seen in our study of psychological structure, of interpersonal relationship, and of the directional quality of all aspects of the psyche, that the latter categories are as relevant and in my mind more relevant than the former, and yet they are submerged.

We can also ask “What are the ‘initial conditions?’” and “What do we bring into the room?”<sup>210</sup> The beginning can be thought of as a conceptual edge—the frame, the start of the story—which we decide, unless it is decided for us, for good or ill. It is arbitrary and important and usually unconscious. Why begin at the “beginning” of the book? Not all are meant to be treated this way; like the I-Ching, for example. But that is an oracular book in a way that the Bible is not. Interestingly, it ends up being used that way anyway, but by using quotations out of context and as a proof of a standpoint; also it has been used as a random oracle generator in the various examples of someone opening to a page either for guidance or inspiration.

### **A Cultural Amplification**

Here is an idiosyncratic amplification that shows what we are up against: The example of the plasma engineers! Plasma is the fourth state of matter. It differs from solids, liquids, and gases in so far as its atoms are divided into free-floating negative electrons and positive ions (an atom which has lost its electrons). It is sometimes referred to as an ionized gas. It is also, notably, found in the present status of matter, not in the

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<sup>210</sup> See Michael Conforti’s *Field, Form and Fate* (Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1999) for a discussion of initial conditions.

measurements of stars, and has not been projected upon like the constellations have always been (apart from some of the “flux” speculations of European and Chinese alchemy). This is from the notes of Hannes Alfven, 1970 Nobel Prize winner and plasma engineer:

I was there when Abbe Georges Lemaitre first proposed this theory [Big Bang]. Lemaitre was, at the time, both a member of the Catholic hierarchy and an accomplished scientist. He said in private that this theory was a way to reconcile science with St. Thomas Aquinas' theological dictum of creatio ex nihilo or creation out of nothing.

There is no rational reason to doubt that the universe has existed indefinitely, for an infinite time. It is only myth that attempts to say how the universe came to be, either four thousand or twenty billion years ago.<sup>211</sup>

A few more words from Alfven seem appropriate here. In 1986 he said, “We should remember that there was once a discipline called Natural Philosophy. Unfortunately, this discipline seems not to exist today. It has been renamed science, but science of today is in danger of losing much of the natural philosophy aspect.”

Alfven believed that territorial dominance, greed, and fear of the unknown were factors in this transition. “Scientists tend to resist interdisciplinary inquiries into their own territory. In many instances, such parochialism is founded on the fear that intrusion from other disciplines would compete unfairly for limited financial resources and thus diminish their own opportunity for research.”<sup>212</sup>

So here (one particular) religion and cosmic science are suspiciously in synch! How does this show a propensity of the Western mind? In the beginning is always interpretation because we are not neutral, ever. (Remember Heidegger’s hermeneutic

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<sup>211</sup> <http://www.thunderbolts.info/wp/2011/10/23/the-plasma-universe-of-hannes-alfvn/>

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

stance on the “circle”—it is important to know where you start and how you get in—because there is no way to be without a perspective). And interpretation begins now, with us. So a psychological hypothesis might be: Part of who we are is to look away, specifically to look back, and to look away for a cause.

You see the need to interpret when something “arises”—that is, it catches your curiosity. We must remember the two conflicting and necessary attitudes for this work: discipline and curiosity.

We can now try to ask: What is the orient—as understood in the Kaufmann manner—of beginning? What is it getting at as an expression of the psyche and how our minds are built?

Like all of the collective symbolic material we hear or read, it operates, as Jung noted, as the dream of a culture, and shows the underlying psychological attitude. Thus it not only shows us who we are, it compensates for a conscious attitude (an aspect that’s bigger than us—the unconscious—is making a corrective to our conscious attitude). One point, both clinical and textual, is that the conscious stance plus the unconscious stance gives us a kind of totality. And paradoxically, the unconscious stance is never directly known but has to come through the lens of some form of consciousness. This perspective changes any rigid attitude about truth-claims.

An important aspect of this approach is the question of why some material becomes collective (that is, widespread, famous, or even assumptive). We can say that it catches fire because it resonates symbolically. For example, why did Christianity sweep across the Western world in the four and fifth centuries, supplanting the Celtic, Greek, Mithraic and other models of the spiritual world? Most non-psychological theories would

cite economic reasons, political reasons, or even spreading cultural factors. However in a more radical explanation, we posit that some unconscious aspect of the collective psyche was not being expressed in an optimal way. That is, something shifted in the collective unconscious which can be tracked through the needs and interests of the population and had to be expressed in a new mythic construct. We could say that what developed was a new reality or a new cultural reality. All of these are here treated as synonyms. However, in this approach all of our usual ways of thinking about causality are undercut. In its mythic stance, the new symbols and narrative expressed something that was truer than the old stance, and so it drew the majority of attitudes toward it.

We can also look at the telos and project where a symbolic or mythic narrative is going. Jung, in his book *Aion*, did this for the Western world, by tracking the fish and the snake, symbols of the Christ, through the last two thousand years. This can also be done with an individual's material.

Genesis is a kind of creation myth. This means we can ask what creation myths are about, as well as what our personal myth of creativity might be, or the moment of creation of our current personality.

Part of this class involves weekly reflection papers. These are key instruments of practice and communication. The assignment for reflection papers is the following: Amplify and translate the passage or section in question. Then ground the translation personally, ground it clinically (if the dynamic is impersonal and collective it will be there no matter what). Here is an expanded version of the translation format presented above:

First: in general, be strict about the text; follow what it says and how it develops. Be wary of assumptions and cultural views. Do not add to the text. This is hard to do, as we will see! Here are the general considerations:

To begin: Get familiar with the story itself. Then -

1. Setting: What is the setting and what does it imply about a state of mind? For instance, we talked about creation being connected to creativity and any mental making of the world. Cain and Abel, on the other hand, are in a situation of presenting themselves to God—which in itself needs translation! Adam and Eve went from primitive paradise to knowledge and suffering.... and so on.
2. The Cast: Who are the characters and what forces or tendencies might they represent (in general and in yourself).
3. Development: What is the build-up or the circumstances? This step is important because, for instance, Cain did not kill Abel due to road rage, but rather because of being slighted by God.
4. Crisis: What is the big moment? This is the narrative high point and helps you identify the most important psychological factor within the narrative.
5. End: What is the conclusion? This is the result of the former steps and shows the potential for what happens psychologically.
6. Amplification: This refers to weaving in, whenever you can, parallels from other similar stories.
7. Grounding: Be sure you relate this to yourself and your own experience.
8. Clinical grounding: Finally, think about how this will help you when you talk to someone else, especially in a chaplaincy situation.



9. The translation into psychological language.

Other things to consider:

Whenever the psyche is preparing a major advance (which we cannot anticipate or know) this demands a reorienting of your attitude. Remember this when we get to the image of building an ark. Typically everything you know is taken from you. What looks like a neurotic struggle is actually the new point of view struggling to emerge and the person is ignoring it. Depression can arise if you resist. Depression in this model of symbolic truth means the psyche is trying to go down...there's something farther down that's being called for. The opposite is true also—that is, it needs support to increase and expand the attitude in question.

The Bible is the unfolding of a cultural psyche. Over time we're uncovering the nature of the divine, whatever we think that is. Is it the same as the psyche? That's not what Jung says. The experiences that are deep and psychological appear in symbols similar to the experiences of the divine. The language of the Bible refers instead to the psychological center of gravity.

Another way to think of this is as the sanctity of the image. We are asked to go with it, to be as faithful as possible to the parameters of the image while translating it. Our attitude is to take the bible as authoritative, but in translation.

**More Textual Amplification**

Back to the beginning: What does the text of the Bible itself say about before the beginning? Was the beginning actually the beginning? Let's look at some examples.

Taking a page from Philo, we can wonder, through translation, what Wisdom says and what some other biblical references to the beginning are:

In the American Standard Version:

“Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.”

Or, from the New International Version (also from the wisdom texts):

The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old;  
I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.  
When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water;  
before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,  
before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.  
I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep...

But then again, Wisdom began this way (Psalm 9:10):

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Here we see that Wisdom is a female voice—the so-called bride of God. What, psychologically, do we make of that?

Philo of Alexandria claims that the literal interpretation stifles the complexity of god and the revelation to humans.

**Here’s an example from literature:**

As far back as Adapa or Adama, the first man, who according to Babylonian lore—lies told in verse that Joseph knew partly by heart—had been the son of Ea, the god of wisdom and the watery depths, and was said to have served the gods as baker and cup bearer. But was not this, too, only a conditional, particular beginning of things? There had been beings even then to watch the creator in wonder and amazement; the sons of god, astral angels—about whom Joseph knew some remarkable and even comic stories—and foul demons.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Thomas Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 11.

Philo again, “Wisdom is older than the creation...of the whole universe.”

The Jewish Targum Neophyti Gen claims: “Two thousand years before the world was created, God created the Torah, that is, divine wisdom.”

Perhaps Wisdom played a role in the creation.

Psalms 104:24: “Oh lord, how great are your words, with wisdom you have made them all.” Philo again: “And who is to be considered the daughter of god but Wisdom, who is the firstborn mother of all things.”

And the introduction to the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Philo: “By using different names for it, Moses indicates that the exalted, heavenly wisdom has many names: he calls it ‘beginning’ ‘image’ and ‘appearance of God.’”

So now we have the beginning of a track on the very image of God.

With these beginnings we can take the idea of the beginning to a clinical and personal level. I would like you to explore the following for the next class:

1. The days of creation: What process does this mimic?
2. So—perhaps “beginning” is another name for wisdom? What might it meant to be inside the beginning/wisdom?
3. The dual creation of humans: What do you notice about them and about the image of God?
4. The famous scene in the Garden: What does it mean?
5. Cain and Abel: What is the terrible implication for all of us?

Creation myths: What are they about? (Remember to review von Franz.)

1. Creation myths are the deepest myths—and are linked to initiation
2. They are concerned with the whole cosmos; so implicate our psychological construction of reality.
3. The origin and nature of human existence is a complete mystery—and wherever we meet the unknown (think of the old maps) “there we project an archetypal image.”
4. As we understand and assimilate a projection, we create the world anew, so we are talking about the “origin of human [*sic*] conscious awareness of the world.”—and that a lot happens in the unconscious to prepare the way!
5. Clinically:
  - a. Schizophrenia is often presaged by world-destruction image
  - b. Schizophrenics sometimes find healing via world-creation motifs
  - c. Cosmic-scale myth appears whenever the psyche is preparing a major advance!
  - d. Creation dynamics are critical in understanding a creative personality, since these people might look neurotic but actually the psyche is demanding
  - e. If threatened by complete dissociation, world creation comp
6. Types of creation: accidental, above to below, below to above, two animals, deus Faber, first victim, primordial egg, creative fire, chains of generation.

An important thing: What is the theme if this is not moral or story but actual structure of the psyche?

Next: review text history. Old Testament Parallels—from Egypt, Babylon and Persia—do they weaken or strengthen the Bible’s authority?

The similarity includes:

1. Genre, vocabulary, motif, social, plot, and history!
2. Mesopotamia: both begin with chaotic waters and conclude with human called ‘man’ and a temple for god. Differences: monotheistic, no origins of god, no god-fighting.
3. A few creation myths in Israel...*logos* vs. *agon* (Isaiah 51:9-10) also *agon* in *bene elohim* still around as angels. So what are “angels”? Translate and ground this.

Let’s consider the change of “voice” (God to Lord God), seventh century Yahwist to sixth-fourth century, and what might this mean psychologically.

We can also use text history in a different way, as a radical device that gives a clearer picture of the psyche. This is like understanding theology as a psychic image. That is, that it is true at the level of symbolic discourse – which it should be remembered, is the only level upon which something can be true.

Consider the Enuma Elish and Hymn to Ptah, including the number of days of creation and what appears on each day.

Let us make “Adam” in our image (remember this is not the gendered term male). However we still need to ask why (psychologically) is god referred to as masculine? Why a plural form of god and a neutral form of human. Refer to Genesis 1: 26- 27. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Is this an image of a hermaphrodite? Not at

all, it is both genders, not a combination. God looks like a conjunction of a set of opposites. This changes our idea of the image of god.

We can look at this as the relationship of female with the animus and the male with the anima. Let's look again at the narrative:

Genesis 3 shows us the Garden of Eden. "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die." Does this mean that if you do not eat, you won't die? Eve was not present when the prohibition was given. Eden is a place where there was no shame. However, remember that original sin and "the fall" were superimposed—it is not in the text. What psychological dynamic might be referred to as original sin? What was occurring here?

To be naked and without shame would be to be like a child. After eating the fruit, nakedness is the first realization. They now see themselves as separate, aware of differences and/or sex. What our culture sees as sin is "becoming aware." It took taking a risk, being disobedient, to gain awareness. We can amplify this through the myth of Prometheus, the fairy tale Blue Beard, and analogous stories. In all of them, consciousness is stolen from the realm of the archetype.

Let's consider the character of the snake, a primordial image of emerging into consciousness. The Gnostic take (notably the Marcionite) inverted the overt narrative, to claim that the earthly realm was made by the evil god, since matter is what imprisons the soul-shard. Since what frees us is soteriological, the snake comes to save humans by giving them consciousness.

We can also consider the types of snakes: the chthonic snake of passion and desire or the snake of everlasting life (in stories of immortality/renewal), or the soter snake of salvation (this is the snake which causes transformation.)

We can consider that shame is a primitive form of consciousness; perhaps it is even a primordial, socially-oriented form of self-awareness.

You have to wonder about the punishment that comes with consciousness. As we individuate, we become more ourselves, less like the collective, and have to fill the gap we leave in the collective fabric. It is like nature trying to fill a vacuum. It is strange but if you look at group dynamics you see that those qualities in person that are not conscious are enacted by others. Similarly, those things about yourself that you're not conscious of end up being unconsciously noticed and lived out by others. Individuation is partly a moral achievement in that one becomes more aware of oneself, and it is partly not a moral thing—in the sense that it means you have a greater capacity for both good and evil.

### **Some Responses From The Class:**

All student responses will be identified by the initials of the author and by blocked text. Student-chaplain reflections were an important part of the feedback loop – so that I became aware of how they were assimilating both the content of the Bible and the method of psychological translation – as well as how they applied it in their work as chaplains. Each class was altered depending on how I assessed these three areas as presented in reflection papers and class discussion from the week before. Because of this there were a number of layers of communication between us which allowed an ongoing correction in pedagogy.

## **MA reflects on the first three chapters of Genesis:**

This section of Genesis might be understood on many levels and here are 3 possibilities I came up with:

original sin

sexuality

awareness (moving away from the primitive state)

The popular version of the story is the explanation for humanity's fall from grace—or the original sin. This is by way of an explanation for the suffering that was the consequence of rebellion or disobedience. This sin could be a representation of the original “separation.” Separation from God that reflects the moment that an infant realizes it is separate from its mother—as in the famous Lacanian mirror stage. On the other hand, the original sin can be thought of as a spiritual death, leading to a spiritual awakening. To become independent, mature adults, we need to strike out on our own, and in making our own decisions without parental approval, we make our mistakes along the way. This may lead to greater maturity.

“Knowledge” of another is a biblical term that refers to sexual intimacy. The serpent in this case would act as a metaphor for sexual indulgence & promiscuity, since the serpent was demonized in Genesis and punished for its part in the ‘downfall’. The lesson here is that behavior arising from careless desire is not acceptable and would be punished. Especially as unrestrained sexual desire might well lead to antisocial aspects of sexuality such as pedophilia, incest or rape, all of which are frowned upon in a Christian society—or indeed in Muslim, Jewish, or Hindu religious cultures\*. It is mostly the case that as we grow and mature we learn to discern right from wrong (according to the values of our culture) and sexual misconduct is universally condemned. Many other religions in this geographical arc feature some version of a tree of knowledge. Eve decides that it (the fruit) was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (3.6) and apparently decides that the wrath of God is worth the risk.

What was eaten, i.e., the fruit, became a part of humanity, thus when the fruit was eaten Adam & Eve were forcibly removed from Eden and their punishment also included knowledge of pain and an awareness of their own mortality (the inevitability of death that God had warned them of) and this is understood (though it may not be accepted) by all people. The temptation of Eve included the invocation to rebel against the order since it said; your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. In fact there was an almost immediate confirmation of this as their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They tried to



cover their nakedness with fig leaves and when God came by on his evening stroll they tried to hide from him in their new-found feelings of guilt. Presumably we all have to choose between good and evil in how we conduct our lives. In most human societies when people transgress they receive punishment. So I am suggesting that through the act of eating we are transformed—we nourish the best and the worst in ourselves. In this way both healthy cells and cancer cells are fed through our bodies receiving sustenance. In our minds or psyche as we grow to maturity we consume ideas (and experiences) and are nourished by the knowledge of temptation and its consequences. We learn that we will grow old, suffer pain and die. (Not sure where I am going with this though it is fascinating to think on).

It might seem that this is a great explanation for the origin of doubt—whether to choose good or evil and in making a choice there is doubt—did I make the right choice? Or guilt might be a factor—oh I have sinned—even though the desire to give in to temptation (at some level depending upon the person and the context) is very powerful and one might say, as the story of the Garden of Eden showed, it is not only tempting but also irresistible.

The serpent has no limbs and could not have tempted Eve by physically offering her the fruit it had itself picked. Though the serpent, at the start of Chapter 3 in Genesis, is described as being more subtle; allusive, cunning, shrewd, discerning or having insight. What exactly the serpent saw as it is represented in the text, is the opportunity to beguile or to enchant Eve. One word for serpent in Hebrew is nachash, and the root is “to hiss,” and this calls up a conspiratorial gesture, one that is designed to cast a spell perhaps. With what purpose? Perhaps to challenge God's authority? Perhaps to promote self-knowledge in those innocent, youthful inhabitants of the Garden of Eden—the original humans? Just as there could not have been a resurrection for Jesus had not Judas betrayed him, there might have needed to be a moment when humanity stepped out of the caves and into the possibility of self-knowledge.

In Jung's writing he believed that self-knowledge is what we continually strive for, it is a kind of unconscious thirst we have to achieve spiritual wholeness. We are born innocent, presumably into a Garden of Eden where all our needs are provided for—but the price we pay as children is obedience to our parents or caregivers. As we grow we have a drive to explore our world. Without strong parental and or social guidance we might fall into all kinds of temptations that can bring about our downfall. Some become tempted towards any number of mind-altering substances and many even become addicted. Others of us are weighed down by powerful feelings of guilt and may be overcome by depression or confusion, even becoming psychotic. The source of the original sin may

be other people (the snake) or our own inability to face the challenges of life, stricken by doubt or guilt.

We require nourishment, food to sustain our physical well-being and growth. As promised by the snake, we may well be god-like in that we have an impulse to honor our spiritual needs and to nourish our souls. If the fruit that was taken from the tree were in fact grape that was made into wine and given to the man to drink, as they both drank it they would undoubtedly have experienced a psychic transformation that certainly would result to some extent in a knowledge of good and evil. The story of the fall from grace speaks to the moment in our lives when many of us fall into what has become known as the long night of the soul—a time to reevaluate the meaning of life and our place in it. I have experienced it and many of the patients at 6 Karpas are going through this traumatic stage of life.

**Another chaplain, CK, writes:**

Is religion a consequence of having the type of brains we come equipped with? Or, is it a matter of having the type of God we come equipped with? A matter of evolution, or a divine result of fate? How can we shed light on what kinds of religions come naturally, developing from our participation in the process of evolution? "For the time being, the data support a more modest conclusion: religious thoughts seem to be an emergent property of our standard cognitive capacities." Pascal Boyer. Religious statements about purity, pollution, the hidden dangers of lurking devils, and ritual precautions (cleansing, checking, delimiting a sacred space), are intuitively appealing. Religious concepts and activities hijack our cognitive resources, as do music, visual art, cuisine, politics, economic institutions and fashion." (the Numinous?) "Hijacking also occurs because religions facilitate the expression of certain behaviours. Just as visual art is more symmetrical and its colors more saturated than what is generally found in nature, religious agents are highly simplified versions of absent human agents and religious rituals are highly stylized versions of precautionary procedures. From, Religion: Bound to Believe

Reading the tales of Genesis while depending on a particular hermeneutic assumption which treats all great cultural artifacts as true documents of the humans psyche, provided a welcome respite from actually trying figure out what God is saying. Guided by the text as symbolic reality, the Book of Genesis provided a rich field in which to develop psychological methods to understand myself, the culture and also helping me to understand patients in a deeper and more compassionate manner.

Re-reading the Bible as psyche was a much tougher challenge as a way to experiencing what is meaningful to a broad range of people than, say, watching “Desperate Housewives of NJ.” I did NOT miss the vacation episodes in wine country, nor did I give-up Week 8 on “Project Runway.” But I was relieved to have a way to read Genesis as a sort of map. Although maps do not have a BEGINNING, they do have an orient. And the orient for the whole Bible is God. Or to put in another way, God embodies a consistent set of metaphors. “Although different metaphors for the same concept are not in general consistent with each other, it is possible to find sets of metaphors that are consistent with each other.” *Metaphors We Live By*, page 219. God created form out of void, establishing a duality distinguished by opposites with interwoven cautionary tales describing what happens when the rules are broken. And rewards for those chosen (sometimes for mysterious reasons, although I hope to be able to amplify, translate and ground the chapter and verse into rhyme and reason). For instance, Chapter One, Verse 7 says “Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.” I was wondering what those waters look like above the firmament. I did not find anything to help with that description and hoped (not too fervently) I would run into one of those cherubim in Verse 24 God placed at the east of the garden of Eden, or those flaming swords which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. I hoped again, but not too fervently (again), since I read what happened to Adam and Eve, and my fig leaf of humor and intellect, won't cover it all anyways.

“Metaphor can contribute to understanding only by making us see objective similarities, that is, similarities between the objective meaning M and M'. These similarities must be based on shared inherent properties of objects—properties that the objects really have, in and of themselves.” *Metaphors We Live By*, page 209.

How many times I have viewed cause and effect and/or karma, as a vigilant teacher keeping a record and report card on my behavior. But Abraham's questioning God's decision and even Cain's blandishment that his punishment is too much for him to bear, may offer some hope that even God can be reasoned with. No obsession with absolute truth, nor insisting that imagination is totally unrestricted.

## **BK**

Creation as Progressive Differentiation:

Genesis 1-6 describes a contrapuntal drama of creation and perpetual differentiation. We find, from the very outset of the text, that God's originary activity—first instanced in the formation of “the heavens and the

earth” (Genesis 1) – installs a fundamental separation between two opposing pairs. This basic separateness between things—recapitulated over a whole series of newly fashioned dualities: light and dark, man and beast, land and sea, water and firmament, and so on—is not incidental to God’s originating activity, but is instead its necessary outcome and accomplishment: to form, in Genesis, is to divide and distinguish. Creation, then, becomes both birth and bifurcation.

We find, for example, such bifurcation in God’s creation of Eve. Before producing Eve, God places Adam in a profound sleep—reminiscent, perhaps, of the vast, undisrupted “sleep” of the formless dark prior to the Creation of matter—opens his flesh, removes one of his ribs, and fashions the female Eve from it. Adam and Eve, then, descend from an original flesh (Adam proclaims: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” [Genesis 2]) produced by God, and yet are in stark, though complementary, contrast to one another.

#### Activity and Passivity in The Creation:

In the beginning passages of Genesis, a profound lack—passive and wholly vacuous—marks one aspect of the original reality. The earth, without form, wears the very face of darkness (Genesis 1), with God’s Spirit “hovering over the face of the waters.” Between this formless, watery darkness and God’s Spirit, nothing tangible, no substantial form, is to be grasped or maintained. God’s Spirit does not touch or converge with the water, it is instead “hovering over” it, remaining in a kind of poised detachment before its endless depth. In this striking image of face mirroring face, neither side of the opposition possesses embodiment or particularity of any kind. God is instead before a radical unknown, and he seems to represent, in the text, a kind of antithetical principle or antidote to its empty, anonymous expanse.

In contrast to this formless passivity of the dark waters, then, God appears as a kind of solitary, radically active principle at the heart of an otherwise inert reality. He issues forth commandments that produce the elemental substrates of creation (Light, Dark, Man, Beast) which themselves have the capacity to reproduce and self-propagate—God begets not only forms, then, but movement and change. His work of dividing, naming, and production is thus in perfect contradistinction to the basic passiveness of the earlier, primeval earth.

And yet, when we follow God’s creation as it gradually advances from the void toward an abundant proliferation of living creatures, we witness a kind of correlative disempowerment of God’s position as absolute active principle. Rather than remaining formed and perfectly submissive, the elements of creation—and humankind in particular—begin to display self-determination: we watch, then, as God and Creation become as though

active partners in an ongoing creation that encompasses them both. We find this especially at work in Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, where God reacts to an action not issued from His own will: that of Adam and Eve's transgressive eating of the fruit.

### **Further Psychological Reflections on the Garden**

Let's look at the story of the Garden in Genesis 2:4 to 3:21 from the point of view of our method. Here we begin to have narrative events as well as a "someone" who could witness them. These are important contextual observations since we need to understand the figures of God, Adam, Eve and the serpent as structural aspects of the psyche. Without an observer there cannot be an ego-oriented type of reflection. Thus before Gen 1:26 there is no one there to observe, so we are likely talking about unconscious or preconscious dynamics.

Another contextual item that jumps out of the text is that this is the beginning of a second creation. We can understand that, without recourse to theology, history or metaphysics, as something more like a description of psychological typology<sup>214</sup> or merely as an indication of a second way that consciousness emerges.

This well-known text has been examined by theologians in various ways for many years, but we are going to try to look at it as an indication of psychological dynamics. After getting to know the story including the lack of shame, the nakedness, the prohibition and the eventual eating of the fruit and expulsion, we can examine the four characters. We can also notice what happens when Adam is confronted by God – he immediately blames Eve, who then blames the serpent. So in this confusion of new

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<sup>214</sup> See the Jungian-based Meyers-Briggs Personality Scale for a world-wide example of Jungian typology, or see Jung's *Psychological Types* for the original and much more nuanced discussion.

consciousness comes not celebration but a negative reaction from the figure of God and the immediate tendency to blame. One question for you all is how to ground that in your own experience or in your chaplaincy.

The figure of the snake, discussed so broadly by Jung and others,<sup>215</sup> is described as the most “subtle” of creatures and can be understood as the animal or instinctual quality closest to consciousness – and perhaps we can propose that those emerging tendencies might be quite tricky. This figure is the intermediary, the one who doubts the givens of a situation and the one which leads (as in the gnostic re-reading) to consciousness. This whole scene begins a larger context for the arc of the biblical narrative: it is the story of a relationship between God (which we will see as the mysterious and unconscious center and source of the psyche) and the various people (which can be thought of as mortal and human aspects of the psyche, namely the ego).

Jung thought that original sin, as a concept of a psychological dynamic, shows the beginning of the process of integrating metaphysical speculation into psychic, that is, personal factors. In a similar vein St. Paul writes in Romans 7: “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

The alchemists, a favorite subject of Jung, understood the disunion of the soul, the apparent changeableness of the body and incorruptibility of the spirit and “*tried to realize the unity foreshadowed in the idea of God by struggling to unite the unio mentalis with the body.*”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Perhaps the best amplification of the snake is by Marie Louise von Franz while in Jung’s seminar. This is described in Jung’s *Children’s Dreams*. Another useful description is by the Jungian analyst Greg Mogenson, and can be found at [http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=277&Itemid=40](http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=277&Itemid=40).

<sup>216</sup> Jung, *CW*, 9i:435.

We find lots of amplification of stealing the symbol of civilization, fire, from the gods, which as we have seen is a worldwide phenomenon exemplified by the story of Prometheus and many others. This indicates that gaining consciousness goes against the tendency of the unconscious forces of the psyche.

In the *Theogeny* we find: *I hunted out the secret source of fire...I filled a fennel stalk therewith...* (showing the guile that is similar to the serpent's function).

### **Chaplain reflections:**

JM

It is clear who is in charge here. God, creator of everything, lays down the rules and you better not break them. The message is clear: 1) You do not set the rules, God does; 2) This happens because you need to be “guided” through life—you cannot figure it out on your own; and 3) If you break the rules there are severe consequences. There is no ambiguity of the sin committed here.

Returning back to the theme of dualism, it is interesting that Adam says he was “afraid” because he was “naked” so he “hid.” It is almost as if he is become more self-aware in this moment. The feeling I get from this is that before partaking of the apple Adam and Eve were at one with all the creatures and with God, and life was like paradise. In dharmic terms, there was no separation, no dualism, no creation of the “self” and “other.” Perhaps his “fall” occurred when he realized his own self and created an other—he created a dualistic world.

### **DO**

Setting/ Orient

The setting is the Garden in the time of the evening breeze. In the KJV it is described as cool. There is a relationship to the image of God/wholeness, who also walks in the garden, which is itself, a mandala. So we are in a protected place at a liminal time. The walking is circulating and we should expect change and transformation.

Narrative structure

The first crisis has already passed. They have been disobedient to the ruling principle of life in the Garden and now they are avoiding relationship with him/it. The serpent, who is crafty like God himself, is

cursed. The serpent in appearance is about as different from humans as you can get and seems to be opposite. But the only thing lower than the serpent is whale shit and so he represents the lowest parts of the psyche as well as craftiness, which require a high degree of consciousness. Adam and Eve existed in primal harmony and nearly hermaphroditic union but now shift blame. The feminine and the masculine principle are split. The craftiness associated with the feminine is cursed and a hierarchy is established which privileges the masculine as the new ruling principle. Desire, which seems to have set all this in motion, will now be channeled to the masculine. And in a sense, God/wholeness abdicates the throne.

#### Translate/Amplify

I am thinking of behavioral aspects of the narrative. That there is for some folks a sense that there was an original or earlier time in their lives when they felt whole and complete. And that somehow that was destroyed/transformed by an increased awareness of darker aspects in life or a greater consciousness. I am thinking now of when I became aware of racial hatred when we moved to the suburbs.

Another psych. Amplification: Psychological and spiritual growth can create wounds/separation.

Mythologically: Hercules stealing apples from the Garden of Hesperides to gain immortality. In the story cracks appear in the image of wholeness before Eve listens to the serpent who she relates to very well. Adam is lonely. God offers him animals and Adam isn't into that. Adam, created in the image of Wholeness, is drawn to the archetype. You could predict he would go for the god-like qualities of his creator.

#### Ground the Image:

##### 1. Clinically

When I was thinking about this section of Genesis I kept looking for a clinical situation where I experienced the patient or family in a childlike innocence. I wasn't really finding much and where I did, the connection to the dynamic structure in the Genesis story felt thin and stretched. I found myself, instead, pulled to a patient and a visit where the content—the patient's contents and history—seemed a long way off from a garden idyll. But the dramatic structure and the patient affect seemed consonant with the story of Adam and Eve meeting God in the cool of the evening.

When I met W. he had recently been admitted to the telemetry floor. He was African American, about 60, came to NYC from the Deep South as young man. I do not recall now what the diagnosis was but he had recently gotten the news that he had a life-threatening heart condition. Over several visits I learned that his image of himself was as a "strong man." He raised



his hands and clenched his fists when he described how he used his strength and hands and how, without exception, he had successfully made his way in the world by force and violence—taking what he wanted. He seems to have never considered any other way of being in the world. But now, he was “broken” and expressed, not exactly regret, but an awareness that he had been “bad” and wanted to know how he could be “good”. He felt burdened by what he had done.

My felt sense of him was vulnerable and broken. He cried, almost keening at times—overwhelmed by grief and scared. I could imagine his old strength and violence. I recalled my recent conversation with my cousin Bobby, who by most accounts would be described as a “bad cop,” and his sense of loss as he hit late middle age and lost his ability and opportunity to act out his rage.

During two of our visits his wife was in the room. She was a church-going Baptist and he regularly “borrowed her robes” to translate his emotions into religious language. He seemed comforted when he was able to do that. He credited her with his new realization but felt blocked by what he had done in the past. He was afraid he would land in hell if he died. He was already in hell and he had no protection.

We talked about prayer and asking for forgiveness. W. had no prayer life, had never been church-going but looked up to his wife and her practice. He felt he had no way to talk to God. So we prayed together, sometimes as a way to gather up the feelings and identify them for a moment, and also to model prayer for him. We kept it simple. I used the language that I heard from his wife, which was very grounded and evoked a personal relationship. He found himself asking for help and direction in prayer.

W. had his eyes opened and his world shattered by his new awareness of his frailty. His reliance on his physical strength, somewhat unexamined and unconscious, put him in a sort of anti- Eden; a darker state of nature than the garden of Genesis. Gardens have their shadow. What is raised up in the growing season is cut down, uprooted, or plowed under in the next. W. is in the senex season on his physical strength, in a cooling down period; “the time of the evening breeze,” and what had served him well for many years now provide no protection. I am thinking now about the aprons (KJV) or loin cloths that Adam and Eve sew for themselves when they become aware of their difference. At the end of Genesis 3, in an act of compassion and protection God himself clothes them in animal skins. W. wanted protection or a place of safety. He was cast out of a place he could never return.

W. is shattered by his knowledge of difference. His state of nature was Hobbesian, not edenic. He suffers in his increased consciousness. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve suffer because they become conscious of their

capacity to choose. W. suffers because he fears the consequences of the life he has been led by. In this way he has been obedient to a single ruling principle in his life. But now that ruling principle is dead and W. is out in the desert with the thorns and thistles.

### **Psychological Reflections on Cain and Able**

The first thing we notice from this story is that God's response is not fair, at least not from a human perspective. It also shows that God is not some kind of featureless absolute, but that there are certain definite preferences—this is partly what makes the God-image in Jung's sense so compelling. It is something to actually get to know.

God also begins his patter of preferring the second-born of two sons over the first-born. We will come back to what that might mean. He also prefers animal life and/or sacrifice over vegetable. Again this is an item that must be amplified and translated. Also look at the first mention of sin: "sin is crouching at the door." The most common illustrations of this have been hunting cats, notably lions, and more recently military allusions. This shows that sin is like an animal itself and it has autonomous and directed agency.

In the narrative, if Cain were operating according to a solid ethical code, he should blame God for the unfair preferencing, but instead he takes it out on Abel ("the thing that is getting it over on me" or in other words the one who benefits from the preference). The first murder occurs. The brothers represent the first set of paired opposites...one's favored, one is not, one's a farmer one's a shepherd, and it shows why, psychologically, the commandment against murder might occur—so that the opposites are held in tension and the concern can be directed at its ultimate source.

However God, understood provisionally as an image of the unconscious center of the psyche, sets the background pattern for everything in human experience. It is also that which we're trying to find a relationship with and to understand the logic of.

The text implies that this God is unfair—so we must propose and test the idea that our unconscious psyches are not fair. We can also ask ourselves where we blame and what agency or factor do we take a perceived unfairness up with. We're all sons and daughters of Cain, since although apologists posit other families, this is the primordial descendent.

Furthermore what does it mean, psychologically, if we are not favored by our own psyches? Remember that for Adam and Eve their transgression at least led to consciousness. What does Cain derive? What is the “mark”?

If Cain's problem is with God, how is that going to appear in us? How does it show up if what we've done is not favored? What do you do with that? How do you address it? What does it do for you? Not being favored by life. How do you go after it? How do you make sense of it? With what?

Again remember in reflection papers and in general, to be strict about the text; what it says and how it develops. Be wary of assumptions and cultural views. This is also a mode of listening to your patients.

Also we will treat this with more depth but let's refer to the authority that Yahweh claims on Sinai (see Exodus 20-21). He looks back to previous patterns of liberation. That gives us a clue to the strange notion of being favored.

## **Chaplain Reflections:**

**IS:**

And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

So this is where that expression comes from. Now I know when I say it I really mean that I am covering up about having killed my brother. Is this a warning about the power of jealousy and the lengths we will go to win the favor of an authority figure?

Blame/denial...what we do not face the consequence of our actions. The 1st moral interactive is blame. The key psychological task is to be aware of it (this is what we do) and take it back.

The active male part blames the aesthetic part who blames the snake. When we come to consciousness there's a slight self-deception/trickster element. Do we blame or do we eat it? Blaming the instinct, consciousness, the feminine.

Sacrifice & the role of sacrifice in covenant, relationship (Christ as lamb of God, Abraham sacrificing Isaac).

**JS:**

What resonates for me as a clinical experience grounded in these matters was a visit to a woman in a residential facility for dementia care, who had bone cancer, had Alzheimer's, and was on hospice. She described going to the doctor, and being upset when the nurses or doctors there would say anything about hospice. She would say things like "Why do they have to keep saying that? I know I am on hospice. I know I am gonna die." I wondered aloud if she felt she could perhaps say something to whoever it was that was saying those things about how they upset her, perhaps say just what she'd said to me. "Oh no" she said, "I do not want to cause any trouble." And our conversation went on like that for a while. Even as she was dying, and becoming more and more confused, she was afraid of the authority figures of the doctor and his staff, of causing trouble, of doing something wrong. And that she was insufficient against such power.

Noah and Flood, Sodomites, Covenant, Jacob and Esau

DO:

A couple questions (which I can save for class) Is the psychic dominant the archetype and what are the related radicals? Clustered archetypes around the dominant archetype?

How to identify the guidelines and how to work with groups of images whether it is the Bible or other dreams.

### **Psychological Reflections on Noah and the Flood**

For this section, let us remember the theme of purification from the viewpoints of both anthropology and the psychology of religion. What does ritual cleansing mean? In the text we see that something, according to the God-image, got out of control. We can also think of what it means to have regression of a serious kind, as indicated by the movement from land to water. Usually this indicates a flood of emotion—that is, something overwhelming (i.e., flooded from the unknown/the unconscious).

In the sentence “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days” we see the presence, in the ego realm, of the archetypes—which do not belong there. Remember that psychosis can be defined as the direct interaction of the ego with the archetypes. In this situation there is no intermediary function—something which is a central theme that develops throughout the biblical narrative.

Our unconscious can take us over at any time. There is something important about the boundary between the conscious and unconscious realms—this is the function of all boundary rituals and symbols and includes the function of skin itself. On the other hand, complexes always have an archetypal core. But the complex could be considered as the intermediary between the divine and human realms. After all, when we’ve been assimilated by the archetype, we are it, we as individuals are subsumed. It is worse than

blind rage. It shows up as psychosis/megalomania. One who thinks they are the savior has been assimilated by the archetype of the savior. It happens when there's an opening of the barrier. The scary thing is that it can happen when you're trying to connect more fully with a realm bigger than the ego, which is of course the goal and function of the religious instinct in general and so is also the curative move.

But the point is that it is a relationship with the archetype that is the goal, as opposed to being assimilated by the archetype. In our text, the divine center has a reaction to earthly, that is, ego realm activity and has a particular reaction: to clean the slate...everything has to go. This seems quite severe, but let us think about times in our lives when everything had to go. In the text Yahweh was willing to compromise if there could be just one righteous piece of creation. This was represented by Noah. The ark is a container for this to happen and in this sort of flooding situation it has to be built for the ego to survive the flood. Even the unclean has to be brought in, as the text mentions. For there to be a generative phase later in the process, there has to be the unclean and the clean. We could think of a sterile cult where it is sanitized and unreal. (This is a tricky area, but let's differentiate between a non-generative kind and a generative kind, not a social definition or Weber's definition.)

Noah is "righteous in the eye of the Lord" but we do not know what that means. What is righteous? There are no laws yet. Still, he did understand the urgency and built the floating container. There is then the archetypal period of forty-nine days. Interestingly, that is not only seven times seven (a squaring factor of the first structural model of human creation) but also the exact time in which the ghost of the dead traverses the Bardo in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. During this time Noah is waiting for the outer

condition to change. These are very important times, sealed in the ark. What is the container, what are the pairs, the unclean, the missing pieces that complete the whole? What is the righteousness? Are the animals the fruitful bits of instincts...the bits that would be okay to bring along?

Clinically you're listening for the call to build. When there is flooding there needs to be a container. There's a generative aspect to the experience of flooding.

A brief amplification is that the alchemists used a container as their main reference for transformation and also that the generative material comes only from the unclean, and also typically from pairs that conjoin. All of that is present here.

## **Psychological Reflections on the Tower**

### **Tower of Babel Gen.11**

"Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." We notice that this is about having a name, an identity. A tower is something that is reaching up towards God. We can think of it as aspirational. On the other hand, the movement of the human realm right up into the realm of the gods or archetypal background of the psyche has dire consequences in all mythologies. The development of one language also cuts out difference. That is, it is not differentiated. We can see the two basic systolic and diastolic movements of the psyche at work here. The aspiration brings people together, it is the congealing and solidifying movement. However, the psyche is also a multiplicity, so too much of that leads to monocular monolithic, monumental rigidity. As the alchemists have noted, it is the tension of opposites and the interaction of the many that generates energy and consciousness.

And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.” So what situation is like that psychologically? Who thinks nothing is impossible? Only the delusional think this way. For everyone else, there are constraints.

“Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.”

We all wish to be unified. If we think of God as another part of ourselves, the image under which we are consolidated, we can see that there has to be a relationship. However, the advent of one language would not be developing in a deep way. This is not a personal statement; rather, the text shows that the center of the psyche is not interested. We have to watch our own tendency to build the monolith. The Tower of Babel story has surprising parallels from China and Mesoamerica, and all three have a structural resemblance to the events and reactions of 9/11. The theme is about tolerating differences. One aspect of the human condition is that there's a heaven above, so building a tower to heaven eliminates something about the very basis of that condition, and yet the aspiration appears in those psyches which are particularly fragmented as a compensatory and congealing impulse.

### **Chaplain Reflections:**

#### **MA**

Amplify: Water is key—in the beginning; “...the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1), then he divided the waters (creating the firmament—contentious meaning though some agreement as dome or vault—the atmosphere surrounding the earth perhaps) and God fills the space on Earth with water (raining for 40 days/nights) so that no land existed and all land animals and humans were destroyed.



Translate: In Jungian psychological terms water, especially large bodies of water, usually is representative of the unconscious. Our unconscious (personal or collective) can overwhelm if we are not aware of the messages coming from it.

Ground: Seems God used water to destroy everything that had not conformed to the law of God. In Jungian terms, when we do not pay attention to the message from the unconscious, this becomes our fate. I experienced my own long night of the soul as I headed away from understanding myself more and rather went for dreams and fantasy of adventure rather than face the reality, that is, until I began slowly to pay attention and become more conscious. I am now anxious about not paying attention (I have glimpsed the power of choosing to remain unconscious) and terror of what I will find. (I am absolutely terrified of deep water and putting my head under water is a torture I choose not to endure).

Clinical: Yesterday's visits with patients raised fears of annihilation—some examples:

Patient A: feared the voices were taking over.

Patient B: absolutely refusing to take the drugs that were going to prevent her from being fully conscious.

Patient C: talked of how attentive and wonderful her husband is—but cried and cried until eventually she confessed that he had stopped having sex with her and she feared he was having an affair (though she was adamant this could not be so).

Patient D: complained continually about staff, hospital and her treatment until we began talking about her fear of dying.

In each case moving toward the patient's fear by acknowledging how real and overwhelming their fears are—the wrath of God knows no bounds and transgression can bring about destruction. We all know this on some level, as the myth of the great flood or some other phenomena is ever present in the various culture responses of humanity.

**JM**

Genesis 11: 1-9

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a place in Shinar and settled there...That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

## Setting

The setting is a plain in Shinar, where “men” have gathered to build a city and a within that city, a tower to the heavens. It is interesting that this story is often retold as the “Tower of Babel”—it is almost as if the setting of the city has been forgotten. With the tower image, there is a movement upwards; I think of development (of the city) and transcendence (of the tower).

## Characters

We see the multi-faceted God in this story, when he/she says “Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” God is at odds with “men” in this story; there is no differentiation of individuals; “men” refers to the collective.

I find it interesting that the men only speak one language. On the one hand, that sounds harmonious. On the other hand, it is limiting. Is the one language somehow holding back their emotional / psychological development...the development of the psyche?

## Build up / Circumstances

Men have come to make this city so that they “make a name for themselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth.” They are coming together and becoming civilized. The tower somehow represents a permanent structure that will protect them or keep them together so that they will not be separated. Their fear is that they will be separated and lose their power; there is strength in numbers.

But maybe to grow spiritually as humans we need to not be limited by one language (possibly only seeing things in one way, for example through a material plane?) but to be split apart and challenged to see things from multiple and deeper perspectives (many languages).

Our tendency may be to come together and try and build a tower to reach the spiritual plane, but that is not going to bear fruit in the end.

## What is the big moment? / Crisis

The big moment happens when God says “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” I am not sure who God represents here and why he stops them from building—why is being able to communicate with one another problematic? Why do they need to be “confused?”

## Amplification

There's a parallel in this story of construction and destruction with the story of Noah's ark and the flood.

There are many myths that explain how people who originally spoke one language came to speak many. In ancient Greece, Hermes is said to have brought diversity of language to the people who initially spoke a single language. This caused chaos and fighting.

## My own experience

Traditionally I learned about this story as one in which man was punished for being haughty and trying to build a tower to heaven. That is, man was trying to imitate or usurp God's power and was punished for his arrogance. But nowhere in the text does it say that.

I know that at times when I have not been able to rely on "one language" (for example, when staying in Korea or communicating with non-English speaking people here in New York) I have had to "think outside the box"—to become creative and really pay attention to see what is going on.

## Clinical observations

I was recently with a patient ("FR") together with a psychologist, who was introducing me as someone who might be able to help the patient with his anxiety/depression through guided imagery and breathe work. The three of us entered into a conversation about the patient's life, which included his involvement with a motorcycle club (not the Hell's Angels, but a similar kind of outfit). He saw the club as his family and spoken openly and clearly about how he knew that they would take care of his wife and children after he died. The psychologist with me seemed to want him to "struggle" more with the idea of his own impending death. It felt like there was "one language" that can be used around death and that is to recognize that it is "hard" and "a struggle" and if you're not feeling or stating that then you must be "in denial." I felt she was pressuring the patient to speak in this language, trying to make it ok for him to open up about his feelings of fear and sadness around death.

He became very blunt as he told us about his life in gangs, in prison, and with HIV. I got the feeling he had confronted death perhaps multiple times and that he was accustomed to thinking about it and talking about it frankly. He said as much: "I told my wife when I met her twelve years ago: You're going to have to take care of the kids when I am gone. She does not want to hear that. But it is true. I am going to leave. I have HIV and I have known that for a long time."

By trying to make the patient speak in “one single language” about his feelings around, and approach to, death, the psychologist was missing what he was saying and feeling. Communication was breaking down.

### **A Review of the Textual Themes Encountered**

Textual themes and some related psychological considerations:

1. The unfolding of the nature of the divine.

- a) Creation, and the subtle image of the role of opposites in making the form of a pair of humans: this is the image of god.

2) Relationship of divine to mortal

- a) The move from a dyad to a triune configuration as knowledge enters into the picture as well as the consciousness of death. The snake. Original sin.

3) The question of the covenant: What is it? With whom/what?

4) The nature and development of sacrifice: What is the dynamic?

- a) The first generation brings blame and death, in the form of murder. The need for sacrifice arises, the non-morality of god, the question of being favored, or not, by fate.
- b) Abraham and Isaac. Sacrifice here is of another.

5) Evil/wrongdoing/sin/righteousness

- a) Flooding, destruction at the hand of the absolute, interaction of mortal and non-mortal brings a wiping-clean. Pairs, ark.
- b) Noah and nakedness
- c) covenant

6) Blame: who, what, when, where

7) The question of consequences—to whom and for what

- a) Abraham. Leaves home, invades, idolatry (of rah). Egypt and abandonment of the anima. Preference of the not-firstborn, mother's sons, venant 2, beginning of the people.
- 8) The idea of needing a "name"
  - a) The tower—an urge for one voice/unity brings dissolution.
- 9) The image of the Pharaoh (vs. god, mother, evil, bondage, nurture!)
- 10) The question of being chosen

Our key hermeneutic challenge so far is the question of self-justification by the narrative versus learning from it. This is a key propensity of all historical and remembered narrative!

## **Abraham**

### **Genesis 22; the sacrifice of Isaac.**

This occurs over a period of three days, which seems to be a marker for themes of sacrifice. However, is this a story about faith? In the text, God comes to test Isaac. If we think of this as a total psychic system, we can ask the personal question: How far are you willing to do the bidding of the psyche? We remember that morality is not in the realm of the psyche. In the animal kingdom the lion eats the gazelle sometimes and does not eat the gazelle other times. Neither is "better" (apart from for the gazelle!) This passage carries an assumption that the world will only be in order if you follow God.

But what does that following and that god mean? We notice there are no feminine participants here. Are there any mothers in the room? Can you imagine what you would do in this situation? This scene is about a masculine form of obedience. It is about one edge of the law, one which has no human relational aspect. We as humans have this propensity and we must watch out for it. This pericope has always been interpreted as

sacrifice but it is a very early version, one that upon reflection looks shaky. Yes Isaac was his son (one of them), but still he was not Abraham himself. In this phase of our development, when we think we're being called— or when we are called to do the grossly immoral thing, we will comply. It is not yet in our conscious ability to resist— and of course religious wars of all ages are replete with examples. Morality, remember, is not a divine attribute (just wait for Job), that is, it is not on the side of the center of the psyche that Jung calls the self. How do we act so that we're in right relation with god?

The beautiful but terrible tension is right here: following whatever we conceive god to be (the most compelling thing possible) is in opposition to what is right. This is like the experience of an addiction. This story shows the non-reducible tension between following our “god” versus taking a stand from a very individual sense; probably a sense outside the collective understanding of community, about what is right.

## **Exodus**

### **Moses and the Pharaoh**

Again we have the difficult task of grounding and understanding some core images from the scripture. We have to ask what is Egypt? What is the Pharaoh? What does the image of “the people” mean? And finally, what about Moses? Let's remember to think of the functions each one serves in the story, and then translate that into a psychological dynamic and find a place in our own experience that corresponds, as well as a clinical example.

We've briefly discussed kings in general, and therefore the Pharaoh as the psychic dominant—the central decision-making, attitude, and mood representative of the psyche. In this case the Pharaoh is both a nurturer and then a symbol of oppression to the people

of Israel. From the people's point of view, it shows that one must leave one's land and come under the control of another in order to advance.

Egypt both saves the Israelites and leads to enslavement. Where have we in our lives been constrained by something that turned out to open us up? The Pharaoh (as the supposed enemy) recognizes that Joseph has God on his side but Joseph's brothers do not.

Jung thought that the image of God changes over time. How can we think of that in a psychological way? In the *Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>217</sup> Kant developed a new working epistemology, which Jung took as a strong challenge to the essentialist rationalism of Descartes. Jung credits Kant for his idea of the “categories of the imagination,” which influenced Jung in his thinking about the archetypes. Key for the idea of the archetypes is that they are in no way things or places; rather they are propensities for certain behavior—that is, they are triggered ways of perceiving. Not only are they testable and the same for all people, but the idea of them frees us from a concretistic view of metaphysical concepts. As in Kant's formulation, we cannot directly apprehend the numina, or absolute level of reality. What is available are images that have some assumed relationship to an “other” but are also descriptive of collective modes of perception and influenced by personal experience. This subtle epistemology allows our method to be respectful of belief statements, while also giving us a means to relate to statements we might not find personally meaningful.

For example, Jung's critical idea of the god image makes no claim about the reality of a metaphysical entity, either pro or con. Instead, it brackets that in order to

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<sup>217</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Dover, 2003).

observe aspects of the image itself, as well as its influence on the well-being and behavior of those to whom it appears. As Jung mentions, “Only a child thinks the world is as he sees it.”

An important aspect of Jung’s observation is that, unlike most new age interpretations of his work, the “God image” is not up to you, it is something you come upon. In that sense it is objective, meaning that it appears to us as object. This is of course similar to statements about God: it is not us, it is another matter. You do not make it, you find it, you discover it. Psychologically, the danger is that if one says “God” or “Buddha” without the understanding that it is an aspect of the psyche, you may fall into the trap of mass hallucination. Something arises out of the collective unconscious that “needs” to be experienced (or needs us to experience it) in a certain way, so certain images take off—just as the Christian one did two millennia ago.

Let’s review some different forms of religion and think of them as psychological modes. These are different models of how people orient themselves in the psyche:

1. Animism...nature/rocks/etc. alive.
2. Matriarchal face...the most important faces of the divine were mothers,
3. Hierarchical monarchy ...Celts, Hindus, Greeks
4. Tribal monotheism (where we are now...one tribe decides there is one god).
5. Universal monotheism...which includes Judaism by its own definition but not of course if one reads the text. And Christianity also self-includes but is a religion of the son, or of the trinity. According to Jung if there is a necessity to only see god as good then the second son (the devil) is driven underground—this is an important observation in clinical situations.



6. “*Bidden or unbidden the divine is present.*” The forces that are bigger than you are going to mess with you whether you believe or not. You have to question your beliefs. If you do not believe, you’re powerless (i.e. it is bad luck, you deserved it, fate).

Jung thought God had two sons: Devil and Christ. In Christianity it was important, psychologically, for good and evil to be clearly differentiated, thus evil is pushed literally underground. This is the point of the objectivity of the psyche. These forces of the psyche interact with the ego whether we like it or not. They come from outside our control or influence. They operate just like the descriptions of gods or angels.

That is, religious language and imagery shows us the phenomenology of the autonomous psyche. This means we all have access to some of it, not all of it. We’re not saying that from within psychology we believe in god or not, since that would be a metaphysical statement. Instead we can observe and observe in others that psychological forces outside the ego have tremendous impact.

This has been a sample of how the material was presented to the class and how they responded. A reasonably full account of the rest of the class is found in Appendix C, though the material there remains in its conversational form. The conclusions about how this material affected the chaplains and their patients can be found both in that material and in Chapter 11 which reports the results of the second survey which was taken after the class ended.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **The Process**

The members of the Site Team of Koshin Paley Ellison and Robert Chodo Campbell have dedicated substantial time and energy in joining me in the process of competency assessment. A summary of our combined assessments of ministerial competencies is as follows.

Morgan understands the main doctrines of the *dharma* and the texts they are based on. He is interested in the practical matter of the application of chaplaincy between faith-groups and the question of understanding theological text from numerous vantage points.

Morgan has a unique lecturing style, one which combines academic knowledge, theological stance, personal experience and a bit of challenge. Candidate could work on not being overly intellectual and to give more examples.

Morgan does not engage in practice leadership in any formal way, although he does operate as a *dharma* teacher at retreats and also teaches classes on the sutras. On the other hand, he has a strong interest in and ability to involve others in the process of processing itself, and in the change to individuals and institutions that this often leads to. This is not a style suited to macro-efforts such as might be useful at the political level, but is important at the class and *sangha* (worship community) level.

Morgan's strength is the multi-faith challenge. He challenges himself, the students, the clergy, the text and the community to see issues and texts from multiple angles, to not shy away from asking the difficult personal and communication-oriented questions that are important for a vital and honest congregation. As a leader, he is very respectful of all views and opinions, and leads, one could say, from 'below' by letting consensus emerge and building interaction. Some have complained that this approach can get chaotic, and yet it is also seen as an important counterbalance to the more didactic methods of other instructors.

Morgan has a unique style as religious educator since he has such a multifaceted view of the needs, goals and purposes of community. That is, tradition as a category is one which is mostly challenged, while fidelity to precise methodology around text is also prized. This allows a creative tension between the 'given' or traditional wisdom and the emergent message of the text and community.

Morgan has obvious personal and professional strengths as a counselor—both in personal and group settings. This is one of his main strengths and comes through in his work as a group-leader, in his psychologically based classes, and interpersonally.

Mr. Stebbins does not have many official duties in *sangha* leadership (that is, as an official pastor) but does participate when asked in a supportive way to the ordained leadership and the general community. However he has growing capacity for supporting the spiritual growth of others within the Zen context, and does so not through the traditional means of the *sanzen* (or formal Zen interview) but rather as mentor and teacher as well as example.

Morgan has few administrative duties but the few that are assigned are taken care of with expediency and care. This statement also covers the area of professional skills, as within the range of teacher, mentor and practice leader his work is exemplary.

### **Competencies Chosen for Development**

Morgan will work on his abilities as an ecumenist. He will relate the text to modern hermeneutic and psychological material in a way that is valuable to both chaplains and patients. His strategy will be to interrogate the text to find meaningful patterns and then provide ways for the students to apply these patterns to themselves and their patients. Evaluation will come both from class feedback and the research questionnaires, which are shown below.

He will also work on his abilities as a religious educator. The goal here will be to orient the students to the many levels of hermeneutic, cultural, psychological, and personal dimensions of the text. The strategy is to design a fourteen week course that includes weekly and overall feedback methods, and the evaluation will come from those forms of feedback.

Finally, Morgan will develop his abilities as a *sangha* leader. He will develop a community ethos based on the radical acceptance of different views as patterns of psychological functioning. Here the strategy will to attempt to show that different points of view in class as well as different texts, interpretations of texts and even theological stances are manifestations of valid world-views if understood from a depth-psychological perspective. The evaluation for this will come from both the site team and the student feedback.

The site-team, having attended some of the classes and spoken to the students, can affirm that this area of development has been achieved very strongly. The students were

highly challenged to understand their own and others' views as psychological patterns rather than as either actions subject to moral judgments or pathological mental states. This has allowed them to understand and communicate with a much wider variety of people, both in and out of the workplace.

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **RESULTS FROM SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE AND FEEDBACK**

This is a gathering of the results from my results survey. The survey asked for some quantitative measures and some qualitative descriptions.

The first question was:

**How helpful did you find the course material to be in your personal reflection process?**

The second question was related:

**Please comment on question 1 and give an example if possible.**

Here are some of those responses:

**Comment** - The personal reflection process was where I really digested the material. In taking specific examples from the readings and then grounding and translating them personally and clinically, the material came alive and became relevant to me and in my chaplaincy work.

**Example** - The Book of Job is a wonderful story about faith but until I could see that I could put myself in Job's shoes as well as his friend's shoes, the story remained separate from my experience. In seeing how my own judgment and discomfort of another person in a state of desperate questioning can cause separation between me and the patient, the story of Job becomes a tool for me to reflect on the disadvantage this can cause in supporting that person if they are a patient in the hospital.

**Comment** - Developing understanding Christian & Hebrew Bible from perspectives: literary, scripturally/theologically, historically and psychologically-grounding this clinically as far as possible.

**Example** - Through translation process I have emergent awareness of the numinous from a personal perceptive and helps me to reflect on possible moments in hospital setting as well.

**Comment** - The course material required a re-reading of the Bible, which lent it a relevancy I have not found to be present in many of the interpretations of the text.

The course material provided a means to integrate the material into a personal practice.

**Comment** - There was the course material presented in the texts: The Bible as the primary text for the course was used as a guide to the structure and dynamics of the psyche. Reading the Bible in this way illuminated the dynamics of my psyche in ways that were surprising and powerful.

**Example** - personal reflection on Genesis 18:1-5 and a growing awareness of an emerging creative aspect in my middle- age. Personal Grounding: I was well into imagining my way into this text when some parallels in my personal story presented themselves, followed by a deeper connection as I was held by an image of Abraham dreaming at his tent door. One, now obvious, parallel: I am an older man with a young child. The deeper connection to the psychological dynamics in the story is with my dreams that seemed to prepare me and to be the very stuff pointing to spiritual/ psychological changes that would come (were already happening before) with my daughter's birth. When I first saw S (my partner) I very quickly developed fantasies of a shared life together with a child. We hadn't even dated. I had little contact with her but would see her across the street from my studio. Later I worked on her house. She seemed uninterested in me apart from ability to fix her house. She also was a polar opposite of women I had been with in the past. And my fantasies continued. I was having waking dreams when I was, for example, swimming in the reservoir, when I had my young daughter with me. Around this time I had a girlfriend who wanted to have a baby with her committed partner. When she and I were together I felt really aware of her fertility. We used to joke together that she might spontaneously become pregnant. When I finally really met S, she told me right away she wasn't interested in dating or fooling around; that she wanted to start a family. I eventually shared my dreams with her. [reflect/expand on the new attitude towards: senex, path, sacrifice, blessing. What is emergent in my present ? what is new in my older age that asks for welcoming and openness]. My dream seemed to both telegraph a new spiritual direction—my chaplaincy training began at the time my daughter was born—and to prepare me for the new path.

**Comment** - I very much enjoyed delving into the Bible, as I was not familiar with the depth, variety, and great intensity of the material we covered. I especially appreciated reading this in our idiosyncratic Zen context, since it allowed me to appreciate aspects of the Christian experience that seem missing or less valued in Buddhism.

The third question was as follows:

**How helpful did you find the specifically biblical material in your chaplaincy?**

The format of this question was quantitative multiple choice. The four possible choices were: Very, Somewhat, Not Very and Not. The results showed that 80% of the responses were “Very” and 20% “Somewhat.”

Question Four was,

**How helpful did you find the way of reading texts?**

1. It was very helpful when there was a good balance of looking at the texts theologically and psychologically. I would prefer spending a little more time with the texts rather than covering as much material as we can squeeze in to a semester. I really enjoyed reading the texts as a way to understand how a patient might be expressing something deeply meaningful about their experience of sickness, dying or change/transition.
2. This difficult methodology though the symbolic meanings gained are proving infinitely richer both spiritually & personally - inquiry into text - translating & grounding it as far as I am able at this stage.
3. The course Bible as Psyche, offered Fall, 2012 has, in my forty years of teaching in the academy in three disciplines, proven to be an original and transformational educational experience. This course introduces a new paradigmatic approach to the Bible encompassing the differing theological belief frames, embedded in rich (sometimes contradictory) historical and cultural contexts, but more so, introduces a unique psychological lens from a Jungian perspective. This allows the student a way of witnessing the grand scale of the sacred processes of humans throughout



history. This wide and yet deep perspective unearths motivations, complexities, struggles in the ongoing discovery of the meanings and evolution of sacred understandings and links with God. For the first time in my readings of the Bible, this approach made the Bible a living, breathing document, one to think with, relate to, and struggle with and go beyond traditional boundaries.

4. The ways to read the texts are just as if not more important than the texts themselves. The symbolic identification, grounding and amplifications, and the analysis of the psychological meanings imbedded were of great use
5. "Helpful" is a funny word for this way of reading texts, though it has been. This way of reading challenges me to listen more deeply to my patients/clients and myself.

Question five was,

**How helpful did you find the mindset indicated in the phrase "Text as an expression of the psyche," meaning did you use the mindset of "true expression" in listening to patient's live words? Please comment.**

1. I find understanding the text as true expression of the psyche really interesting and helpful in hearing a greater range of what the patient is actually saying.
2. Patient as 'text'? Myself as 'text' - experiences fully explored make it possible to 'touch' another's pain - often unspoken. Honing my receptiveness to a patient & h/her 'meta' narrative requires close 'reading' of what the patient is communicating (all forms of this). The mindset indicates an inquiry approach to listening & responding (as appropriate).
3. What made the class work? The professor's open inquisitive excitement and knowledge, his energy and authenticity, his devotion to the spirit of inquiry and

discovery, his modeling of the utter joy in exploring, thinking, reflecting from new perspectives, spaces, creative zones. We are all carried away within the safety of our group to trek together the slippery slopes of the truly unknown. We were introduced to a novel, surprising way of looking at the world and humanity through the Bible as trope. We are left with ourselves to struggle and grope through labyrinths of human construction and deconstructions of the meanings of the sacred in all sorts of contexts and time, and also to view as if from an eagle's perch the machinations of religious evolutions over history, and time. We are beginning to arrive at a deeper grounding in the understanding of the production of meanings and construction of understandings in the bind of vulnerabilities and moralities when humans are faced with the certainty of mortality. The evolutionary creativeness is astounding!

4. I was sitting with a patient today. I see her every day. She really knows her Bible and is thrilled that I know what she is talking about. When I was listening to her I was so grateful for your last class on the Bible and Psyche. It really helps me to be in relationship to patients who believe strongly and are at the end of their lives and maybe losing their minds. On another note my desk mate who is a Jehovah's Witness said what I thought was astounding. He suggested from his beliefs that the Bible may be referencing the end as a very personal death. In other words it is all relative to an individual in their life. He was able to see it as "a story" of how to live.

5. Yes. the embedded and embodied story, the 'metastory' is one way to listen to a patient. This method is subtle, complex and requires a grounding in my own personal story. This is a true challenge and a great teaching.
6. Very helpful. My bereaving clients sometimes are anxious to know if what they are experiencing in their dreams and waking life is "real." Example below.
7. I have not yet fully practiced this with patients, though I do find the mindset (that our words express symbolically what is at issue psychologically) in general true.

Question six followed up on the previous one,

**Can you give an example?**

1. It seems that any story (biblical, news story, mythological) can be used to express how I understand what I am experiencing. Something in the story brings life to a question or an experience by pointing to a direction where meaning can be found. I once visited with a patient who was relieved by the imminent ending of the Mayan calendar, which he understood to mean the end of the world. I wasn't able to meet this man with a mindset of "true expression" and therefore couldn't learn more with him about what truth the story held for him. Recently I was especially interested in a story of how expert skiers died in an avalanche because they gave up their "beginners mind." It helped me see how I find myself in trouble when I do the same.
2. Patient wringing her hands with guilt about her past 'sins' (as I have experienced in a life of sex, drugs & rock'n roll). Self-forgiveness is almost impossible unless something heaves the guilt aside-her & her - tale of the Prodigal Son useful in bringing forth tears -tears indicated a possibility of forgiveness. Some sort of permission to see this as possible- the biblical story touched a nerve - meta

awareness of my own pain & trying out the story as a 'heard' her need for self-forgiveness.

3. Mr. W. is a middle-age Chinese American MD who recently lost his partner of 8 years. He has been very concerned to know if his experiences of grief are normal (his phrase). He has stayed very busy since his partner died, trying successfully to maintain business as usual. Only recently has he noticed diminished energy and some depression. During our last session he told me he was working on the house that he and his partner shared after the recent hurricane. As he was putting up the last board he found he was without the kind of nails he needed. He looked down in the dirt and found a plastic bag with precisely the kind and number of nails he needed. He experienced this as the presence of his dead partner in his life. Together we looked at the images in the story he told. I could say a lot more but this was a turning point in our work together.

Question seven was put this way,

**Do you have any suggestions to improve this method of listening and textual reading?**

1. Ideally, it is best to give up expert-mind and use beginners mind in listening and reading. What this means to me is to have a questioning mind. In order to have a questing mind first I recognize when I believe I understand something and how that can make me jump ahead and miss something great. If I can slow down and pause when I think I understand something, ask myself how I understand it and get curious about that thing that stands out either as an assumption or a real question mark and admit my ignorance. After that I can have an interesting conversation with another person, or learn something about myself, or understand

a text from different perspectives. This kind of inquiry and listening can really make a person feel heard because they are being heard, in a deeper and more open way that gives space to another's reality. I have found that when a patient is free to express or explore their own thinking or beliefs they feel affirmed or more clear.

2. Thorough exploration of language, metaphors & symbols in popular scriptures, prayers, popular culture (films, songs, art, poetry) as traces of numinous in current contexts.

Question eight was open ended, and asked for further examples:

**If you would like to give an example of using this method in a clinical setting, please do so.**

1. I recently visited the room of a man whose wife greeted me at the foot of his bed. Her husband was seriously ill and asleep at the time. It turned out she and her family were Muslims and at first spoke about it in a fearful, apologetic way. But when she saw I was genuinely interested and had no agenda she began to express her deep faith and basic tenets that she follows devoutly. I think this eased her fears and allowed her to teach me about Islam and Allah, as well as affirm her own deep belief which, I think, helped express some of her sadness and put it into context religiously.
2. At times speaking indirectly - through metaphor & symbols - allows us to 'talk' about 'God' without saying as much, & a religiously resistant patient can step into this space through discussion about certain cultural icons s/he is familiar & comfortable with.
3. As biblical neophyte this course has been useful allowing me an entry into the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to gain:

- a. a foundational perspective of the human psyche as it has evolved over millennia;
- b. an insight into how biblical scholars view some of the complexities involved;
- c. an understanding of the parallels between the spiritual and psychological difficulties faced by biblical characters, thus allowing me to reflect on my own experiences along with those of people I am connected with, especially patients (their families and hospital staff);
- d. a desire to continue to understand the nexus between the human psyche and how spirituality has been expressed by humanity in the myriad ways;
- e. a drive to deepen understanding of my inner world and what being touched by what the numinous really means.

Although these responses are self-explanatory, in my reflection upon them, I found that I was struck by the commitment that the chaplains showed to the work and to their patients. I was also surprised at the level of personal searching and insight that they engaged in through the material and the use of the method. I both deeply grateful for that spirit of engagement and also can see a number of ways that the method can be clarified and the teaching of can be made more systematic.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL**



The Bible as Psyche:  
Developing Tools for Psychological  
Translational of Scripture

for

Contemplative Care and Reflection  
In Chaplaincy

By

Morgan Stebbins, MDiv, LMSW, LP

New York Theological Seminary

February 1, 2013

**Challenge Statement**

As a core faculty member of the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care and an adjunct at NYTS, I am engaged in the training of chaplains from diverse (often Buddhist) theological backgrounds. These chaplains need a set of tools with which to deeply engage both Biblical text and the patients for whom this text is foundational to spiritual understanding. For this project, I will develop, distribute and test these tools' usefulness in the field.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING.....	1
CHAPTER 2 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS.....	4
CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION.....	7
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	8
CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS.....	10
CHAPTER 6 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES.....	11
APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE.....	15
APPENDIX 2: BUDGET.....	16
APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRES.....	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	18

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

Twenty-five hundred years ago the historical Buddha established a practice to address suffering, old age, sickness and death. In this tradition, Koshin Paley Ellison and Robert Chodo Campbell, Zen Buddhist priests & chaplains, established the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, in the heart of New York City in 2006.

Recognized as true pioneers and leaders in the Buddhist Chaplaincy field, the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care is creatively transforming pastoral care by being both the first and only Buddhist organization to offer a fully-accredited ACPE CPE Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program in America. NYZCCC integrates Buddhist contemplative practices into the professional training, creating a dynamic program that is interfaith and experience-based, geared toward developing professionals and those seeking to deepen their spiritual, caregiving practice.

NYZCCC also offers a year-long Foundations in Contemplative Caregiving Training Program, which provides the groundwork for your contemplative care practice. Students fulfill the program requirements through class participation, 100 hours of contemplative care volunteering, rigorous reading and writing exercises and an end-of-year project.

Our Senior Chaplains, our Chaplaincy students, and Contemplative Care Volunteers are trained caregivers who provide direct care to the sick, dying and suffering. Beth Israel Medical Center, one of New York City's largest premier hospitals, has integrated NYZCCC's group of Clinical Pastoral Education Chaplain Interns and our Contemplative Care Volunteers into their Integrative Medicine

Department where we work directly with those in need. NYZCCC also provides Contemplative Care Volunteers to organizations such as Visiting Nurse Service of New York's Hospice, with one-year placements at their local residencies as well as in individual patients' homes. The Center's staff chaplains also volunteer with outreach programs at the Continuum Center for Health and Healing and similar care-giving organizations.

NYZCCC's educational programs, trainings and retreats are attended by hundreds of participants every year. From professional one-day training programs at The New York Open Center to extended retreats at Garrison Institute, our programs attract the widest variety of like-minded people. Refining caregiving skills, stress reduction, meditation development, contemplative practices, deep inquiry, spiritual care, and open dialogue champion our program goals.

One patient at a time, NYZCCC manifests its mission of treating those who are suffering with the wisdom, compassion and equanimity of the Buddhist teachings.

(from the [zencare.org](http://zencare.org) website)

Some statistics pertaining to service:

Since August 2007:

- 43,478 individuals received contemplative care in the face of death, cancer, AIDS, and other illnesses
- 15,681 family members, couples and friends received contemplative care as they dealt with grief, mourning and loss
- 30,299 hours of compassionate care have been given by our volunteer chaplains
- 11,784 staff people in hospitals, hospices, and prisons received spiritual care, including doctors, nurses, social workers and officers

- 3,094 Contemplative care and meditation groups were run by our volunteer chaplains, with over 10,903 people attending.
- 5,315 men and women from the general public have received education in topics such as death and dying, Buddhist approaches to death, addictions and spirituality, and contemplative practices.<sup>1</sup>

My particular role has been somewhat multifaceted. I serve as an advisor to some of the students in both the chaplaincy and MDiv programs, I am on the design team for the academic structure of the program, I am a co-teacher for retreats and I am one of the core faculty. This project is primarily an outgrowth of the latter role although it has relevance for all of them.

As one of the core faculty, and the one primarily responsible for the cross-cultural and ecumenical education of the chaplains, I'm also the one most likely to be teaching a non-Buddhist course. In teaching to the chaplains I am always concerned that they have a broad range of hermeneutic tools that work both in academic settings and which can be useful as ways to think about worship and meaning-of-life situations that constantly challenge them.

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<sup>1</sup> This information is from the NYZCCC website, found at [zencare.org](http://zencare.org).

## CHAPTER 2 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Embedded in the text and traditions of both Jesus and the Buddha is the question of how to integrate spiritual practice with action in the world. Almost any reading of the texts indicates that for both, this action necessitates efforts to create a more just and compassionate society. One of the ways this goal has been pursued in the last century has been the practice of volunteer (as well as professional) hospital and hospice-based chaplaincy. The training of chaplains is focused both on developing the person of the chaplain as well as her or his skills in listening, understanding and compassionate contemplative care.

However, as a faculty member at the NYZCCC I have heard about and seen a discrepancy between text and practice both within the chaplains themselves and also between the chaplains and their patients. Many of the chaplains are practicing Buddhists and yet almost all of them have a background in an Abrahamic faith to a greater or lesser degree. The great majority of the patients share this background. However, the means to engage with Biblical text in a way that is at once meaningful and modern, transformational, contemplative and compassionate, has been lacking.

This project proposes using the tools of depth psychology to uncover levels of personal engagement and meaning in Biblical texts without necessitating a particular theological stance or membership in a tradition of faith. In looking at this as a topic choice, the site team and I tried to narrow down the many and varied academic needs of the chaplains to a set that was both manageable and which addressed the most pressing needs.

This project has a relative urgency – for some chaplains, these tools are needed immediately - while for others the pull was not as great. Also it seems to me that although inter-faith dialogue in general is a developing field, the acquisition of these kinds of tools and modes of thinking is timeless. I remember a time in my own seminary training when a Baptist friend of mine confided that his own pastor had urged him to avoid seminary training on the grounds that he would lose his faith. I asked him if that had happened and he said, “Yes! But now I feel that I actually understand the scripture in a deeper way, so it is growing back from a stronger root.” In a way this is my goal with this project: to challenge the chaplains to use all of their intellectual and emotional resources to engage the text and allow themselves to come away changed.

I do not feel that there is a problem that requires systematic change (at least not within the scope of this project – I could think of lots of other types of systematic changes that I’d be very glad to see). Part of this thinking emerges from the question of resources available. Within the structure of the NYZCCC and the site team in general are both the opportunity and the encouragement to teach the chaplains as well as the context in which to test the outcome of the project.

My expectations of the project and its usefulness are varied. The outcome will depend in large part on my ability to develop clear and useful tools and then to communicate them. Unfortunately the understanding of these tools entails a fairly developed hermeneutic stance, so this will need to be communicated as well. Another variable factor is the interest and ability of the chaplains to use these methods as well as the perceived relevance to their own patient population. These things will be at least partly measured by the initial survey.

The chaplains' interest and investment are likely to be quite high, given what I already know of their commitment to their own contemplative practices as well as patient care. I have no idea how to assure personal satisfaction in either of these areas but certainly the ongoing relevance of the project will be determined by those very factors.

In terms of conflict of interest, a number of possibilities emerge.



CHAPTER 3  
PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

**Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1** – Develop awareness of the need for a non-traditional biblical orientation.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and administer a survey of chaplains.

**Strategy 2:** Analyze the results of the survey.

**Expected Response:** 90% Response expected.

**Goal 2** – Recruit 12 chaplains-in-training and teach the translational and reflective tools.

**Strategy 1:** Determine ability and interest.

**Strategy 2:** Recruit!

**Goal 3** – Create a set of tools for translation and reflection

**Strategy 1:** Review tools currently available

**Strategy 2:** Develop new tools from knowledge of psychological language.

**Evaluation:** Feedback from the Site Team as well as the chaplaincy students

**Goal 4** – Teach the tools to the student-chaplains for use in the field.

**Strategy 1:** 14 weeks of class

**Strategy 2:** Reflection papers

**Strategy 3:** Interviews

**Evaluation:** Pre and post questionnaires and interviews; determine next steps as well as the efficacy of the translational and contemplative tools in practice.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### 1. Historical Attitudes Toward Scripture: Is a new approach needed?

This section will briefly explore the historical attitudes toward scripture and its use in chaplaincy settings.

- Historical attitudes
- Use in chaplaincy
- The changing face of chaplains and chaplaincy
- The modern person: myth beyond myth

#### 2. Best Practice and Spirituality: Personal inquiry and patient care

What is the research on spiritual practice in chaplaincy and palliative care, and what does it imply about best practice and new directions?

- Health and spirit
- Quality of life
- The person of the chaplain
- Connection, understanding and scripture

#### 3. The Development of Depth-Psychological Tools

This section will explore the background of alternative views of scriptures especially that of the depth psychological traditions, as well as give a foundation for a new understanding of metaphor.

- Approaches from within the community
- First metaphorical approach to scripture (1949 and following)
- The problem of psychologizing

- Jung and the symbolic reality: scripture as psyche
- William Covert, McGann, etc.
- Hillman
- Metaphors we live by – physicality, mirror neurons, etc.
- Culture as metaphor
- Amplification and translation in practice
- Open inquiry versus closed or aimed inquiry
- The challenges of Ricoeur and Tillich

## CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS

### **Method of evaluation 1**

In October, student-chaplains will be surveyed to assay the need for a set of interpretive Bible tools that are not based on a theological stance.

### **Method of evaluation 2**

Student-chaplains will again be surveyed at mid-point in the learning process and after the class about the usefulness of the tools in a variety of settings, including ministerial competencies that were enhanced, comfort with and understanding of exogamous texts, and practical results obtained.

## CHAPTER 6 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

### **The Process**

The members of the Site Team of Koshin Paley Ellison and Robert Chodo Campbell have dedicated substantial time and energy in joining me in the process of competency assessment. A summary of the Site Team's and my assessments of ministerial competencies is as follows:

### **Dharma Understanding (Theologian)**

Candidate understands the main doctrines of the dharma and the texts they are based on. Candidate is interested in the practical matter of the application of chaplaincy between faith-groups and the question of understanding theological text from numerous vantage points.

### **Dharma Communicator (Preacher)**

Candidate has a unique lecturing style, one which combines academic knowledge, theological stance, personal experience and a bit of challenge. Candidate could work on not being overly intellectual and to give more examples.

### **Practice Leader (Worship Leader)**

Candidate does not engage in practice leadership in any significant way, unless thought of pedagogically.

### **Change Agent**

Candidate has a strong interest in and ability to involve others in the process of processing itself, and in the change to individuals and institutions that this often leads to. This is not a style suited to macro-efforts such as might be useful at the political level, but is important at the class and sangha (worship community) level.

### **Ecumenist**

Candidate's strength is the multi-faith challenge. He challenges himself, the students, the clergy, the text and the community to see issues and texts from multiple angles, to not shy away from asking the difficult personal and communication-oriented questions that are important for a vital and honest congregation.

### **Leader**

Candidate is very respectful of all views and opinions, and leads, one could say, from 'below' by letting consensus emerge and building interaction.

### **Religious Educator**

Candidate has a unique style as religious educator since he has such a multifaceted view of the needs, goals and purposes of community. That is, tradition as a category is one which is mostly challenged, while fidelity to precise methodology around text is also prized. This allows a creative tension between the 'given' or traditional wisdom and the emergent message of the text and community.

**Counselor**

The candidate has obvious personal and professional strengths as a counselor – both in personal and group settings. This is one of his main strengths.

**Sangha Leadership (Pastor/Shepherd)**

Candidate does not have many official duties in sangha leadership but does participate when asked in a supportive way to the ordained leadership and the general community.

**Spiritual Leader**

Candidate has growing capacity for supporting the spiritual growth of others within the Zen context, and does so not through the traditional means of the *sanzen* (or formal Zen interview) but rather as mentor and teacher as well as example.

**Administrator**

Candidate has few administrative duties but the few that are assigned are taken care of with expediency and care.

**Professional Skills**

It is hard to know what this category means in this context, but the professional skills within the range of teacher, mentor and practice leader are exemplary.

**Competencies Chosen for Development****Ecumenist**

Candidate will relate the text to modern hermeneutic and psychological material in a way that is valuable to both chaplains and patients.

**Strategy:**

I will interrogate the text to find meaningful patterns and then provide ways for the students to apply these patterns to themselves and their patients.

**Evaluation:**

Evaluation will come both from class feedback and the research questionnaires.

**Religious Educator**

Candidate will orient the students to the many levels of hermeneutic, cultural, psychological, and personal dimensions of the text.

**Strategy:**

I will design a 14 week course with a weekly feedback system.

**Evaluation:**

The weekly feedback will give evaluation and will be supplemented by overall evaluation.

**Sangha Leadership**

Candidate will develop a community ethos based on the radical acceptance of different views as patterns of psychological functioning.

**Strategy:**

I will attempt to show that different points of view in class as well as different texts, interpretations of texts and even theological stances are manifestations of valid world-views if understood from a depth-psychological perspective.

**Evaluation:**

Both the site team and the class will give written evaluations.



# APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE

Timeline:

Date	Task	Tools	Person Responsible
Spring 2012	Conception	Access to chaplains	Morgan S.
Summer 2012	Questionnaires/recruitment	Access to students, emails	Morgan and chaplains
	Proposal accepted		
Fall 2012	Class done, tools distributed, field practice		
January 2013	Data gathered		
	Meet with site team		
	Meet with Advisor		
February 2013	Data analyzed: conclusions		

## APPENDIX 2: BUDGET

The budget is likely to be quite low, consisting mostly of personal travel and time spent.

## APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRES

### **I. Initial Survey:**

Makeup of the chaplaincy community

Makeup of chaplaincy patients

Need for Biblical Understanding

### **II. Reflections and Tuning**

Understanding of tools

Understanding of text through using the tools

Applicability

### **III. Use in the Field**

Results in general

Specific Scenarios

Pros and Cons

Interviews

Feedback and changes to tools

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## APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRES<sup>218</sup>

### I. Initial Survey:

#### Assessment of Need for Bible Tools in Chaplaincy

1. How many hours per week do you engage in chaplaincy or care-giving activity?

0      1-5      6-10      11-15      15+

2. How many people would you estimate you visit each week?

3. How important would you say that a religious, spiritual or other meaning-based approach is in your practice of chaplaincy or care-giving?

[Very important] [Fairly important] [Not very important] [Not important at all]

4. What religious tradition, if any, did you grow up with?

5. What religious tradition or spiritual practice, if any, do you engage in currently?

6. Of your chaplaincy patients, for what percentage would a greater knowledge of biblical themes be helpful?

[75% or more] [50-75%] [25-50%] [less than 25%]

7. How helpful would it be to have a way to understand the biblical text and themes from a depth psychological perspective? (Depth psychology defined as an experiential grounding of the text as a whole and with references to metaphysical

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<sup>218</sup> The surveys were conducted using Survey Monkey online tools. The following is a text-only version of the questions asked in each survey:

concepts understood as descriptions of unconscious contents emerging into consciousness)

[Very helpful] [Somewhat helpful] [Moderately helpful] [Not helpful]

8. How helpful would it be to have a way to deeply engage the biblical text personally, regardless of your own theological background or preference?

[Very helpful] [Somewhat helpful] [Moderately helpful] [Not helpful]

9. Is there anything in particular you would like to see included in a set of tools with which to read, understand, and communicate about the Bible and its themes in a chaplaincy situation?

10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

## **II. Use in the Field: Results**

### **Bible Tools Usefulness Assessment**

1. How helpful did you find the course material to be in your personal reflection process?

[Very] [Somewhat] [Not Very] [Not]

2. Please comment on the above and add an example if you would like to.

Comment

Example

3. How helpful did you find the specifically biblical material in your chaplaincy?

[Very] [Somewhat] [Not Very] [Not]

4. How helpful did you find the way of reading texts?

5. How helpful did you find the mindset indicated in the phrase "Text as an expression of the psyche," meaning did you use the mindset of "true expression" in listening to patient's live words? Please comment.

6. How helpful did you find the mindset indicated in the phrase "Text as an expression of the psyche," meaning did you use the mindset of "true expression" in listening to patient's live words? Please comment.

6. Can you give an example?

7. Do you have any suggestions to improve this method of listening and textual reading?

8. If you would like to give an example of using this method in a clinical setting, please do so.



**APPENDIX C**  
**VERBATIM UNEDITED CLASS NOTES:**

EGYPT, THE DECALOGUE, JOSEPH, ECCLESIASTES, LUKE, JOHN

Let us now consider the symbol of Egypt:

Sometimes patients appear to talk on and on endlessly, avoiding revelation (at least this is how it seems.) Here are three ways to develop your listening:

- 1) Wonder if the story is a way to get away from an affect that's trying to come in (though it is probably there in the story itself).
- 2) Look at a big arc of the narrative.
- 3) Pick out an affective "high spot."

An affect (or feeling) is a guide to the arch of the story. Usually there is only one thing going on. Something mirroring the patient's story in his psyche...what else is it referring to? For instance, who is the first one who goes to Egypt? It is Abraham. Egypt nourishes him then he leaves. Then Joseph goes as a slave, but is made into a lord, and he prepares the ground for his brothers. We think it is terrible that he was sold into slavery but it turned out that he was able to save his brothers and tribe. So we can look for something cast away into the psyche where it abides until it can be useful.

As Jung mentions in *Children's Dreams*, the hardest thing to do is to become ourselves. This is one reason we have guilt when we develop new consciousness and also why guilt should be understood as a debt to the total psyche. Joseph would never have made something of himself if he hadn't been sold into slavery. Remember the Chinese story "Good/bad who knows?" Also remember that images of a prison scenario or slavery happen when someone is beginning to discover who they are. Attitudes and events in projection happen one after another, and these alternations are precursors of a kind of

attitude that experiences both together...up and down, slavery and freedom, hunger and feast. Alternating becomes simultaneous. Most of us experience things in an alternating way due to the focusing and exclusive nature of consciousness, rather than simultaneously. So while Joseph is alive, the Jews flourish, working for the Egyptians they are slaves of a sort but fed. As long as they are fed and taken care of (before the Pharaoh and Joseph die) all is apparently well. Then everything changes...attitudes change and something that was nurturing is no longer.

Israelites went to Egypt every time they had a problem. Only at the end were the Egyptians reluctant to let them go. This is like a reliance on going home...though we do not usually think of that as slavery, and yet it is in a psychological way. But this is very much the way the mother archetype is described: it protects and nourishes but becomes negative (meaning it retards growth) if it holds on. In this model, Egypt is home and Pharaoh is Mom. As one is coming out of the holding, nurturing environment, the feminine becomes differentiated. We can see in the case of Miriam, the first prophet, that the women show up very differently in this story. Is the fact that Miriam is the first prophet relating to something in the bigger narrative?

Our constraints within this methodology include the discipline of not believing but experiencing. What difference does it make? What if you could not make any metaphysical statements without using an “as-if” preface? As Ricoeur showed in *Oneself as Another*, the bracketing of truth claims changes the tenor of our conversation.

In this text the idea of sacrifice and the question of what we’re enslaved to are big questions. What are we at war with? Remember that God drove the Pharaoh’s reversal of mind even when he was about to release the Hebrews. This is a critical understanding—

that Yahweh hardened the Pharaoh's heart, meaning that the tension there is orchestrated from a level far above the ego. We can ground this in what look like obvious choices in clinical situations. For instance, if a "bad" situation was really completely bad, we'd always leave when the balance shifted and never have the neurotic situations in which we stay in a problematic relationship too long, and so on.

Let's move on to the images of God in the wilderness. What comes to us when we are lost? What about the burning bush? How do you understand this symbol? What does not burn, what has an eternal flame but an image of God? Does it relate to us as something special that might speak to us? It cannot be put out. This is like the self's command to individuate. However like the Pharaoh but reversed, the Israelites are not comfortable about moving on and following this strange unnatural sign. And the signs of consciousness are always unnatural, since what is natural is vegetation and animal life. We can see the series of plagues as like a response to a substance in addiction, in that it takes gradually more and more severe consequences to raise consciousness to the point of meaningful action.

The plagues are like the series of experience that it takes for one to hit bottom. But why, in all this, does God need to prove his glory? The Pharaoh is the dominant part of the situation—which has to let go, to be depotentiated by the part represented by Moses. The dominant is being relativized. A shifting of the center is always a destabilizing event, even in a therapeutic endeavor.

The pharaoh is worried about a loss of profit, and indeed the dominant part will lose not only its own authority (remember it is an autonomous entity) but also is something, in absolutely any change, that will be really lost. Also there's a part of us that gets

something out of staying and not changing; in psychoanalytic jargon it is called secondary gain. That is, it is the neurotic profit we get from staying in a difficult situation. You have to have an understanding of the full self. The psyche itself seems to be looking for something, perhaps recognition of a particular kind, perhaps looking for a relationship with conscious personality. After all, we do not live as though the psyche was there, as if conscious of looking through the lens of human perception, yet that's the reality.

What about the first plague? The death of the Egyptian first-born is a death of potential/heritage. What does that mean psychologically? What kind of warning is the elimination of our first product, of that with which we make our name?

When the dominants change, the old (Pharaoh) is losing its grip, losing its nourishment. There's a break in continuity; since the first-born represent the future, it is the death of the future. From the perception of the dominant, you realize there's no future. We'd never let go of a dominant if we did not come to realize there's no future. This is the big turning point, and it is why the last plague is darkness. If you can imagine a future for a dominant (an addiction) it will continue to pull you.

God calls the people of Israel his first-born son. Yahweh calls them to leave the nurturing land which has become enslavement; the mother archetype. Remember the line of patriarchs: it wasn't time for the first-born in all of the previous stories; rather the situations favored the second. Finally, here, it is different. After leaving the home, there's now the first-born that is valued. Something is ready.

Regression is a movement down and in. For Jung it is not a bad thing. It means taking account of the internal. Regression is in service of the whole self. Meditation is

organized regression, taking account of the internal environment. This is not to say that some regression is not just whining, but that is the other kind, the kind that wants to go back to Egypt, and we see that here as well.

The link between the righteous/chosen (Abraham, Isaac & Jacob) aspects and God had been forgotten and a change of dominant occurs: Pharaoh to Moses.

The Israelites groan and God hears and responds. We have to listen to the suffering; we have to allow the whole of ourselves to hear it. The pain eventually penetrates the psyche. Without recognition of the suffering the psyche won't mobilize. We begin to see the pain outweighs the gain; the addiction becomes less of a benefit.

The old dominant has to realize there's no future in it anymore. And again, we see that as the psyche develops, God recedes. In the midwife section, Chapter 1, because "they feared god he gave them families." "The fear of god is the beginning of wisdom" as Augustine reminds us.

Fear of god is right relationship. Why is it thought of as fear? Perhaps because it is a recognizing of the power of the other, it is larger than we are, and dangerous. It demands something—if not obedience, then at least recognition. No wonder so much energy is invested in apotropaic ritual! The big spiritual question might be thought of as: What is the shape of that which is bigger than me, and how do I live according to it (the spiritual life)?

Yahweh has a few answers: "I am who I am." Or "I am that I am." This implies that it is about being. The Abrahamic dominant is scary (in that he is willing to sacrifice his son.) Moses whines and resists—this is the beginning of a relationship!

Why do we need signs (God turned the staff into a serpent and back; hand leprous then not; water to blood and back)? When we have no confidence, we look for signs...but it is a trick, something that the Egyptian magicians can do as well. We need to know, a sign, that things can change, there's potential. Once things become fluid and you can go back and forth, you're more willing to believe change can happen. It is not the change, only hope that change can happen.

We have a reference to the structure of the concept of laziness. It is something that I think is grossly misunderstood. In Chapter 17, Pharaoh calls the people lazy for their desire to go pray and sacrifice. He increases the workload; they have to make bricks without hay. That is, they have to work harder and harder for the same result, the pressure increasing, leading to motivation to change. This is how we recognize when a change is needed. When the dominant demands more than is possible, and when the effort to pray, sacrifice and worship is thought of as lazy, then it no longer serves. When we try to orient ourselves toward god it is not seen as being productive but being lazy. Think about when you use the word "lazy" toward yourself or others. It is typically when we're not meeting the expectations of the outer order or being drawn to anything that appeals to you, speaks to you personally. It is usually not something valued by the dominant of the society, and sometimes even the dominant of our psyche. It is an incorrect judgment. It is hard to tell from the outside whether it is an infantile fantasy or a laziness that's leading to worship. Letting things percolate.

Another version of sacrifice...the first particular way of eating, cooking Chapter 12 and 14, the first Passover. This is the first ritual: to remember. What is the sheep, what is the lamb?

When the timing is right you have to act...(leaving without having time for the bread to rise). You escape slavery and it sucks...they're starving. You escape the bad dominant and things are not better. The period of transition to the new dominant. We're in the wilderness when you've left a dominant that had no future and find yourself in the wilderness. "It was all nice back there." It is the bardo, between dominants.

When the totality of the self comes upon us, especially unawares, this leads to anxiety. This can happen in many ways, ways that shake or expose the foundation of some part of our lives. In the Bible this is referenced by the many ways of saying that "No man shall see me (Yahweh) and live." (Ex 33:20) This is stated even more generally in the famous reference from Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." However, there is a fascinating dichotomy here (or trichotomy), since one can certainly hear the voice of God – since that is constantly happening and seems to be Yahweh's preferred mode of communication. There are also good arguments for Yahweh being invisible (John 1:18 and Timothy 1:17), and of course the lone example of Jacob having seen God "face to face" and lived (Gen 32:30 – although this was clearly an angelic form and seems to mean something more like "intimately" which is a usage repeated elsewhere), but nevertheless the most common understanding was that the holy of holies was empty, that Yahweh could be seen as other things (a whirlwind, bush, etc.), and that a direct confrontation with whatever the "face" of God might be was both terrifying and deadly.

Related to this is the view, from an archetypal perspective, of space and time as inventions or categories of our mind. They are of course very useful categories as are all

adaptive projections, but are not valid in the realm of the imagination or in its biblical corollary, the divine sphere.

This view is an aspect of the similarity, as far as it has been described by scripture, mystics, mythology, dreams and visions, of the concept of the self and the descriptions of Yahweh. Remember as well our metaphor of the whale and rider, the expansion of the idea of the elephant and rider from Tim Haight's book *The Righteous Mind*. The whale is even less susceptible to steering than the elephant; in fact, the whale appears to not even know there is a rider except under special circumstances. This understanding is the source of consciousness about the psyche since we are identified with the rider—although the whale is actually what constitutes most of our being.

So we have another psychological sentence: in the wilderness (where, like the unconscious, people do not live), we find the majestic unknown. This encounter typically produces anxiety at the least, and more likely fear, and therefore regret.

On the other hand, you have to obey (the voice) in order to become “chosen.” This is a very important aspect of the experience of chosen-ness. Being chosen is clearly not an indication of otherwise special qualities, since at this point in the narrative “the people of Israel” are a disorganized, lawless, and lost grouping of humanity, much like the typical ego. Into this scene comes the function of a Moses, as a mediator.

One of Jung's central tropes is, “Wherever unconsciousness reigns there is bondage and possession.” So we can begin to ground different kinds of lack of consciousness as bondage and as possession by other influences. Remember that Jung's model, like the current findings of neuro-cognitive research, posits a very multiple sort of mind with



competing modules or influences. This is how we can seem to be in different moods very suddenly, and even to have different personalities in extreme cases.

In the next part of the narrative we will encounter the so-called commandments. As you do, try to, as usual, translate and ground them, and think about the following questions. Is there a theme or hierarchy to the commandments? What narrative events lead up to the hierophany and how does that show us what psychic dynamic is unfolding? Also, without resorting to other commentaries, see if you can number them and ground the commandments. And finally the big question: What do they mean? Here's a hint—they do not mean anything literal or moral!

### **Student Reflections**

#### **BK**

A crucial theme running through these chapters in Exodus is that of calling, or “chosenness.” We discover Moses, and then the people of Israel themselves, gradually growing in their awareness of having God’s special favor and selection. This favor and selection inaugurates a fundamental shift in their relationship to destiny and time, as Moses and his people have now moved from a materially bound present (as Pharaoh’s slaves) to a spiritually bound one (as God’s chosen people). Their awareness of selection does not arrive, then, with simple ease or straightforward acceptance, but carries instead a mounting sense of burden and even—paradoxically, given the seeming infallibility and omnipotence of God’s direction and protection—of vulnerability, albeit of a wholly unprecedented kind. For with this notion of chosenness comes a new kind of disorientation and existential uncertainty: Do Moses and his people “have” God’s favor or does God’s favor “have” them? This existential uncertainty is embodied, in the Exodus story, as a dynamic tension between total liberation and total dependence; just as Moses and the Israelis escape from Egypt and therefore gain a certain kind of freedom, they nevertheless do so only to become progressively aligned with (or, depending on your point of view, possessed by) another boundary, this time ultimate: that of God’s will.

Calling or chosenness is therefore a gift not unequivocally given—offering only profit, a goodness without exchange or expectation—but entails also, in these chapters, a profound loss: that of autonomous determination, or the illusion of ever having possessed such a thing. In an

important moment in God's first conversation with Moses, we find Moses wondering just how, given his lack of eloquence and skillful communication, he is to accomplish the mission God entrusts him with. God tells him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I? the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be your mouth and teach you what you shall say" (4:12). We might imagine a renewed confidence on Moses's part, given that God assures him His total support—even to the point of partially directing Moses's own actions—but instead Moses responds by entreating him to choose someone else: "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send" (4:13). It would be possible to interpret Moses's reluctance as a kind of cowardice, and yet a more charitable view might allow for the truly radical terror implied by such an enterprise. For it is not just that Moses is entrusted with a mission of extraordinary importance—that of liberating the Jews from Pharaoh's tyrannical oppression—but, more profoundly, that he is to give up something in the process, namely, his own power of determination, self-derived and wholly exclusive. In the above exchange, God tells Moses not to worry precisely because Moses will no longer be the only source of his own self-action. This gradual giving up is perhaps Moses's only fundamentally heroic act, then, for unlike any of his actions that follow—his speaking to Pharaoh, his performing the various plagues, his parting the Red Sea—such a relinquishment is his alone to accomplish and bear. Indeed, the more he enters into conversation with God, the less Moses possesses any sense of discrete and wholly singular self-will.

We might ground these twin notions of calling and relinquishment in the closely connected experience of death. It is possible to describe death as a kind of universal calling, a sort of absolute dictate that divests each individual of any last vestige of autonomy or self-possessed activity. To respond to such a calling would be to unfold the gradual relinquishment of self-ownership. To the degree that such a relinquishment occurs consciously, there is, perhaps, a growing sense of the profound unity of self and collective—death allowing the individual an intimacy with that which is available to everyone equally, and ushering that individual from a point of view of pure self-referentiality to one broadly human, perhaps even universal, in scope.

We might also relate this close connection between calling, relinquishment, and death, to the task of becoming oneself—described, in Jung's terminology, as the process of individuation. The Jungian Aniella Jaffe writes, "the task of individuation is ultimately a preparation for death." Perhaps such an understanding of individuation refers to the growing awareness—available at death but also at any stage of life—that appears whenever a person encounters himself as both a recipient and an active expression of some form of autonomous movement or pattern, at work both within him or herself and others equally. Such an awareness

seems to grow, paradoxically, just as the experience as a solitary and self-governed being diminishes. Like Moses and his people, a new kind of liberation may result from this diminution—one freed from the anxious concerns of the self-referentially focused consciousness—yet such liberation also enters into another bond, one that, this time, cannot be contained or cajoled by the self and its demands.

The notion of individuation, then, would tend to run counter to typical understandings of self-development and growth. Rather than bolstering an egoic sense of autonomy and power to govern, the individuation process would instead seem to issue forth precisely where the ego cannot competently function. Like Moses, such a gradual dispossession could produce in us a good deal of resistance, even terror. On the other hand, viewed from another perspective (one not available in this section of the Bible) such liberation/dispossession could also be seen as an occasion for joy.

### **Class Commentary**

Finally we come to The Decalogue (Gen 18-40). Interestingly, it is not referred to by this name in the text itself, so, much like other culturally ubiquitous theological references, like The Fall, the name itself should be seen as an external reference and not a self-conscious identification from within the tradition. Any psychological commentary would then be properly directed at the group that did the naming, rather than the text itself or the community from which the text arose. The Sinai experience was certainly a turning point; for the first time a code that defined righteousness emerges. What moment is that in the psyche?

Let's review three quite different views of this moment:

1) "*An experience of the Self is always a defeat for the ego.*" (Vol. 14, par 778) Jung said this in a particular context of an experience of the numinous side of the psyche, that is, in terms of a big experience that can strongly move or even shatter the personal consciousness. Approaching the self in this way is like Job making his stand with God. We can see that defeat is a particular word, and that encounters with the self do not

always appear in this form in the various other ways Jung talks about it. This is similar to the experience beautifully described in Rilke's poem, *The Man Watching*.

2) Edward Edinger takes his usual Calvinistic stance and claims that every time you encounter the Self the ego should be humbled, and that if you do not obey, there will be unforgiving punishment. We have already seen that not everything can be fit into his scheme of the ego-self axis.

3) My view, and it is a small view based on opinion, experience, and clinical results, is that an experience of the larger psyche need not be humbling. In fact it looks to me like better clinical results come from teasing out the next accomplishment or insight that is about ready to emerge and embracing it. From this perspective, once it can be tolerated, an experience of the self can be also an experience of dissolving in joyousness.

Who are the chosen? What is it to be the chosen? As we see in the text, and as we can ground in our lives, it means you cannot get away with anything! Think about what it might be to be righteous in the eye of the Lord. A similar question is whether anyone can be themselves without a master—this is a trick question given our understanding of the unconscious.

Here's a quick perusal of the ten words, or *mitzvot*, and some of the things to think about when translating them. First and most importantly, when seen as aspects of the psyche, they can be understood as either the parameters of a relationship or even more radically, the result of right relationship. Also, they are counted differently in Jewish and Christian models. The first Jewish commandment is the Christian prologue:

*“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”*<sup>219</sup> Understanding who takes this attitude as the beginning of spirituality is a clue about how that person is built.

This refers to the covenant. This is God saying, in case you’re wondering what the center of your consciousness looks like, this is what broke your shackles (brought thee out of the land of Egypt) in the past. Remember those times. It is been there all along. It is what changed the dominant from the Pharaoh dominant to the Moses dominant and which will change again. The force that allows us to change the dominant is God.

It is not that there aren’t other Gods (there are other things we might be oriented to) but only this one is to be honored in the sense of identified as the liberator. Whatever powers/pulls free the shackles is God.

With You shall have no other gods before me, the psyche is now concerned with a centralizing move from many powers or angels having a charge and an authority to a single thing having a charge, leading to living a certain way. Also, as the Christian first commandment, we might predict a fascination with exclusive theology.

What could be meant by “a jealous God?” A jealous center of ourselves is concerned about us. It wants you, only you—there’s an inclining or a desire there. You hurt your psyche by straying, at this point, from the center. It sets up relationship—apparently the psyche needs us. After all, we’re the manifestation of the psyche on the physical plane, in the human realm. Without us god has no expression. In many mythos, such as the gnostic and the Kabbalistic *tikkun*, humans are necessary in the healing of god. In the gnostic

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<sup>219</sup> Biblical references are to the RSV unless otherwise noted. Chaplains were told that the RSV or NRSV were the standard academic references but were also free to use different translations as long as they could psychologically investigate the difference in wording.

story, all the pieces of the shattered god (that was the pleroma) become, in the sub-lunar sphere, our souls. The main promise is to become the chosen.

Next is:

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (idol) or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*

*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate (hate) me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (KJV)*

This is a very tough commandment, one that is rarely well understood and is constantly violated. It is the beginning of a trend towards a loving god. If you are loving and at peace with yourself, the mercy manifests indefinitely.

*“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (idol) or any likeness of any kind”* indicates that we need to be careful of the products of the imagination...they can be dangerous. As Jung declared, *“When one man has an image, another man dies.”*<sup>220</sup> Do not be creative with the commandments. Most imagination does not lead us towards the core of a situation or complex. It takes a disciplined imagination to create beautiful art or music, etc. We could even paraphrase it as “No screwing around with other things you might become entranced with.” So Islam and to some extent Eastern Orthodox and Catholic theology tried to limit the free imagination of the population and it worked for a long time. Remember the line from Rilke’s *The Man Watching*:

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<sup>220</sup> C.G Jung, *Letters*, Vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

What we choose to fight is so tiny!

What fights us is so great!

If only we would let ourselves be dominated

as things do by some immense storm,

we would become strong too, and not need names.<sup>221</sup>

Something about how to live is appearing here. The conscious and unconscious, not good and evil, are the great opposites, and the tension of opposites drives consciousness.

This is why Jung said that the greater the light (of consciousness), the darker the shadow becomes. That is, we develop a greater the capacity for harm. The greater your consciousness, the more alone you'll be.

Be aware that we give too much credit to the ego and our control over the motivation of the ego. We typically do both too much, and it is probably a way of taking neurotic responsibility for events that are beyond any direct control, meaning that we both think too highly of personal agency and yet also blame the ego. But what often happens is something much more subtle. Where do we get renewed hope or inspiration? It is often really about a word of the divine-other that's going to come of itself and motivate us. One of the magical points in a therapeutic action is when the level of motivation changes. Studies can now measure our amount of willpower, and it is a small reservoir, applicable to only a few areas at any given time. In a 12-step program, something in you imbues the program with authority, and in "giving up" your will, there is actually a shift of will to another level of the psyche. Until the motivational shift occurs, no change can happen.

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<sup>221</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. Robert Bly (New York: Harper Collins, 1981), 105.

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* There are so many ways to look at this. For now, let's wonder: In what situations do we feel the need to invoke something bigger than the ego? There are certain experiences, most notably the liminal markers of development such as birth, initiation, and death that need this reference to unconscious collective norms. However, there are plenty of places where this reference is not appropriate, and if you do not take the "Lord's name" you cannot give supernatural authority to your actions. In this case it is about not invoking the absolute. We invoke the name to give authority. "It hurts your spirit." So we can wonder: What is the correct use of the name of the Lord?

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* Remember back to the concept of being lazy. With the observation of a sabbath, you're not supporting the collective dominant, since it is not productive. If you're doing it in the spirit of productivity, it is forbidden on the Sabbath. The sabbath allows the psyche time to flourish in the rhythm of the creative process. If you think about the ratio presented here, it is just about two hours per waking day (of fourteen hours) or one day per week paid (or better, sacrificed) to the non-ego side. This lost time will be fruitful to the self but an injury to personal consciousness.

*Honour thy father and thy mother:* know that which you came from—that is, contemplate your deep origins. Discover and understand the pairs of opposites that bring you forth moment by moment into being in the world.

*Thou shalt not kill.* The word kill can also be translated as murder. Let's remember that all civilizations abide by the same essential interpersonal rules, even if they do not have a code of conduct like these. Evolutionary anthropology has shown us that the presence or absence of moral codes does not affect morality in any society that's been



studied. There is a political layer of course, since killing is very different from murder. The former is justifiable under most law, the latter is not, and the latter usually refers to someone within your own cohort or culture, that is, a neighbor. If we can expand our conceptual circle of neighbors, then morality looks very different. Psychologically, we can notice that eliminating one of the warring opposites shuts down the polar opposites necessary for consciousness. So we could translate this as: do not kill off what you're struggling with. Let's think about Cain and Abel. If Cain hadn't killed Abel, he would have had to live with a situation that was very uncomfortable, a situation in which a Job-like confrontation with God might have ensued. So we do not kill off the things that we wrestle with. This includes things like impulses, thoughts, or desires. It does mean to avoid repressing them, and includes overt actions that end a sort of contending. Again, think about Jacob.

We only have time for brief comments on the other commandments, and I'll have to leave you to translate and ground them in your reflection papers. Thou shalt not commit adultery. This is related to the last one and is again about the opposites, though this time about the conjoining opposites. It has to do with leaving your internal union, that is, about staying true towards that which is oriented towards you.

Thou shalt not steal. What is not of ourselves? What attitude, what honors, what gossip, what is ours? When we take on something not of ourselves, we hurt the relationship with our own deep structure. Needing to steal is experiencing yourself as not being enough. The vessel is sealed because everything is within. Everything you need is already in your psyche, stealing is a double or triple contamination of that. Taking on that which is not you. Heading towards coveting/envy. Stealing the promethean fire/exploring

without an end point, leads to punishment. Destruction of your idealized self. When one of these cycles of process happens, you evaluate the benefit. Cannot guarantee there will be one. We all have a great projection on the outcome (it will be good, although it can be quite awesome in its terribleness.)

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* This one all depends on the meaning of neighbor. Since we're going the psychological route, let's think of it as about internal neighbors—they're the most difficult anyway! How do we encounter our opinions about others? They come from projection and from gossip. (Etymology: God's sib(ling).) Gossip is one of the most important mechanisms in society. Reputation is all we have in social networking. ("That's where the truth is.") Remember that before you understand projection as projection, it is the truth.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.* This commandment is the only one that does not have to do with action or anything volitional! How can you control what you desire? It does imply that if you actively covet, that there is something lacking inside—and what you covet is symbolically that which will in fact help the relationship, whereas the outer craving will hurt it. This heads towards the Pauline doctrine, that it is not what you put into your mouth that makes you unclean but what comes out.

There's something here about comparative impulses. Studies now show that what makes most people happy/unhappy is their place within their own small social construct. It is all relative (above a sustenance level). Across all cultures. What is the gold standard in the Bible? Relationship to righteousness.

## **The Delay**

While Moses is up on the mountain, the Israelites appeal to Aaron. They want to worship something in the terrible delay, the liminal time of the mountain. This is the role of idols. This is the crucial moment, the timing is critical, but a false imagination comes in and the opening for a relationship may be diverted. Do we ever have the ego strength for this? We need support. We cannot look on the face of God. That is, we have to be careful about getting too close to the numinous.

There's an intermediary (Moses) which is other and within us. He is the main prophet, and one role of the prophets is trying to figure out why bad things happened to the people. (Numbers, Leviticus & Deuteronomy...the setting up of the codes...last three books of the Torah.) At this point, after the Sinai scene, we know a number of things about the relationship with God. We have the idea of sacrifice.

This material is deeply archetypal. You can expect to have weird dreams after reading Ezekiel. That image of four living creatures with four faces is also the face of God! Wrestling with this material is the goal, and it is the way we can practice our clinical practice. These are not, psychologically, recordings of powerful experiences, but are themselves powerful experiences. In clinical work, you can only accompany people as deeply into a process as you've gone yourself. There is also a way to monitor your openness and curiosity level. If you have no reaction to passages in Ezekiel you know you need to dial it up. If too much reaction, something has been set off in your psyche which you need to look at. These are the experiences of the holy which are collective in the West. We might not agree with it, but we are called to engage with it. Prophetic teachings allow us to question our own call...and the call comes in lots of forms (Jonah...the ego/person who cannot be bothered by the call of the Other/Self).

It is important to not valorize the call. (You cannot force a call but there are serious repercussions from ignoring a call.) Everything is happening at the behest of the other side. Most prophets (Moses and Jonah are the prime examples) were reluctant. On the other hand, Isaiah volunteers over and over again! We each respond to the call in one of these many ways. This call comes in many forms. We see it here in a burning bush, a pillar, a whirlwind, an earthquake and fire, or, in First King 19 verses 10—12 – Elijah hears it as a soft stillness...still, small voice...the sound of a soft stillness. It is not the fire/earthquake but soft stillness.

Let's remember that we are here treating the commandments as guidelines for a relationship. The construction of a vas (the inner vessel of the alchemists) or the building of a temple. The thing about the call is that there is no choice. What is the call about? The goal has been variously described: the promised land, the pure land.

Here's a thought-provoking quotation from a letter that Nietzsche wrote to his sister: "If you like peace & tranquility then by all means believe. And if you are after the truth then inquire."

Or from Jung, a similar sentiment: "There is no place where those striving after consciousness can find absolute safety. Doubt and insecurity are the indispensable components of a complete life. Only those who can lose this life can really gain it." (This was from a letter to Father White, his long-time friend and theological sparring partner.)

Let's think about a very famous and very oddly translated phrase, the commandment that "thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Gen 23:19 and Deut 14:21). For those that do not know, this is the phrase that the kosher law is based on. It seems to me to be a pretty far reach! But it is not if we're talking about spiritual nourishment. How can we

think about this? Well, what is the relationship between a kid and mother's milk?

Mother's milk is the essential food that sustains babies. It is what is given freely and allows growth. So the prohibition is against using that which sustains to kill. This could be using a secret to harm, or something like using meditation as a means of protecting oneself. What feeds a young relationship? Openness, trust, vulnerability, desire. However when you use something that's intimate to someone to destroy or harm someone you are taking just this intimate nurturing material and turning it into a boiling cauldron. This could be something like misusing a confession or any destruction of confidentiality.

What do we do when god turns away? That is, in a delay, like when Moses is up on the mountain, or in chaplaincy, when we get anxious, we turn away and begin to treat ourselves. Ezekiel is even more radical about the cosmic transgression and alienation of the Israelites.

If in cleaning the house or the cosmos of the psyche, do we keep a remnant (like Noah) or toss it all away (like Ezekiel and the dancing bones)? In the latter there has to be a complete burning up, all the sinew, flesh, etc., all that's the reductive process, burning it all off so we become reduced to elements. Again, this is different from the process in Isaiah where there's a remnant, in fact, a root or stump, to become the basis for renewal. In the model of complete annihilation leading to renewal (psychological, spiritual) there is an elimination of the self-identificatory link, leading to wholly new life. Until you lose your life, you will not gain it, that is, there is no permanence or continuity. We find this idea in both Christianity and Buddhism.

A psyche that's estranged: This is us. Isaiah's message is there is going to be a comeuppance and the righteous remnant will survive. In the coming of the suffering

servant "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18) This is the consequence of our rebellion against our true nature. Also remember that the Jews were looking for a messiah, but not the one that came. However, since we take the perspective that whatever happened was the psyche expressing itself as it needed, we can read this as the coming of an internal messiah). Verse 11:6 shows the opposites as reconciled, as happy with each other. The lion and the lamb represent the reconciliation of opposites. It is what happens when the messiah has come. "The child," the new king, a new dominant. The child king and suffering servant are the important new symbols arising in these passages.

When we see the narrative through Isaiah 53:10, we notice that the idea of sacrifice totally changes here—he is not even scapegoating the scapegoat. The Lord will crush him in pain and he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge, that is, he is a willing and personal sacrifice. So, choosing the suffering is an aspect of the suffering servant.

This is the Beginning of a code. What is a code? How is it other than, or similar to, a path? Why do we feel differently about it than about the laws of nature? Experiment!

As we continue to deepen our understanding of sacrifice, let's consider these four psychological functions outlined by Edward Edinger:

1. Sacrifice as payment—the other requires attention
2. Sacrifice as atonement—restitution to restore balance—a giving up of ego value
3. Sacrifice as feeding god—it is fed by religious attitude and spiritualization
4. Sacrifice as a feeding of the individual, spiritually, in doing the above

## Student Reflections

**MA:**

What is the meaning of graven image?

Graven image is given as 'idolatry' and is originally from the Greek 'eidolon' meaning "image" or "figure," or latreuein "to worship" from latron or "payment." However, this term was new, as it does not appear to have existed in pre-Christian Greek literature. The literal meaning is that one should not attempt to fashion or make an image, as it will be considered to be an idol. It is now used when describing the worship of an idol or a cult image as a god, and the term is always a derogatory one. I found that in all \*Abrahamic religions "idolatry" is forbidden and the behavior that is most objectionable is the religious worship of a physical object. This is considered a vice and the Apostolic Decree prohibited it as the "pollution of idols." Apostolic Decree is said to have been decided at the Early Christian council in Jerusalem around year 50 and can also be found in the Acts, the fifth book of the New Testament. The term false idol then is tautological given that its usage is a negative term anyway and to underline this, Moses "waxed anger hot" when seeing the molten calf of gold on his return with the two tablets (stone) of testimony—where the commandments had been written by the hand of God, 32:19. (Now I found this interesting since there was a command not to make graven images and worship idols, but the "tables that were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables", 32:16.)

Anyway Moses smashed these stone tablets when he saw that the people were worshipping this Golden Calf, so disgusted was he.

God does not allow himself to be seen.

Later when Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside of the camp he went into the tabernacle and all the people came out of their tents and stood by the door of their tents and watched as Moses went in and the 'cloudy pillar' stood by the door of the tabernacle and then the Lord talked with Moses and "every man in his tent door", worshipped 33:11. While talking with God on this occasion Moses asked, "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and I consider that this nation is thy people", 33:13. The Lord agreed to show mercy and promised to "make all his goodness pass before thee", 33:19, and God promised Moses the world, except for one thing: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live", 33:20.

Well now this seems to be a bit of a change from when God had walked with Adam and Eve, in Genesis, apparently showing himself freely. As the

story of the bible unfolds he becomes a voice in the burning bush, a trickster in Egypt playing a double game between the Israelites and the Pharaoh (I will harden the heart of Pharaoh), and now in the second book of the bible we have a God that dare not be seen—in any form and by anyone.

What is the psychological meaning?

The Ten Commandments are situated within the framework of a religion of a specific people—the \*Abrahamic beliefs are built on what had gone before. The term \*Abrahamic religion includes Judaism, Christianity and Islam as these religions have Abraham as an important figure but also they are monotheistic – worshipping and believing in only one god. We see very clearly that Egyptian civilization in the time of the Old Testament held polytheistic beliefs, so that psychologically the transition from polytheistic to monotheistic belief systems would have represented an internal struggle as a new consciousness emerged. Civilizations were becoming less reliant on the natural world for existential answers in nature and were looking further afield for answers to the great mysteries—in music, art, and science in the Greek and Islamic civilizations.

The biblical stories have antecedents in an earlier history, and as you have reminded us repeatedly, religion has a major role in the formation of psychological development—or maybe that should be worded as “religion reflects it.” Anyhow, I now have a small insight into that body of thought and it appears that Hegel, in the 18th century, highlighted the psychological motivations, saying (something like) a community’s struggle is to know itself so as to correctly manage itself, and further, that religion is a repository of wisdom handed down from humanity’s past and it embodies the stages of the development along a continuum of development of “self-knowledge” (in a societal sense). Okay so consciousness is the thing we’re going for.

What is consciousness?

If Hegel was referring to the stages of consciousness what is that? According to Wikipedia consciousness is the quality or state of being aware of an external object, or something within oneself. This is not an exact fit but suffice it to say that as we go through childhood and adolescence to adulthood, if we are to become truly mature, we must leave behind the unconscious world and face a wider and stranger one. Jung likened this trajectory to the expulsion from the Garden of Eden—we are forced to reject the innocent, blissful and uncomplicated lives of our childhood and go into a world with a growing awareness of good and evil (we probably did eat the apple from a certain forbidden tree). Jung wrote that traditionally the fall is regarded as a curse, but when viewed as the



dawn of consciousness, it foreshadows our progress toward an evolving consciousness.

Why is consciousness worth the effort?

Clinging stubbornly to past ideas and illusions results in atrophy and astaticism, (I am aware of this in some people I have known). Usually (about midlife) painful emotions drive us deeper into our own darkness to find out who or what we truly are. There is no getting away from the fact that it is a challenging path to take. Here I see parallels with the story of the Old Testament and the evolution of conscious thought. The consciousness that began to emerge when Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden has, by the second book of the Hebrew Bible, reached another phase of development. The Israelites are kicked out of Egypt (with God on their side of course) and are now wandering the wilderness. They are in fact in the dark. It could even be the beginning of their dark night of the soul and no doubt I will find out as I read the rest of the text. But for now there's all that thirst and hunger, a mountain that smokes and growls that they cannot go near, Moses is 'waxing anger hot' on seeing their idolatry, and then he has mysterious talks with a shadowy column figure inside the covenant. There's a lot that is terrifying here.

Why not look upon the face of God?

Moses went up to the Mount alone to meet with God but everyone else was forbidden 'whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:' (19.12). What is this telling us? In Jung's view "wholeness" is the primary human goal of bringing together aspects of the unconscious with the conscious (individuation). There is a caveat and it is that the journey involves danger whereby a person may become overwhelmed by what Jung called "suprapersonal forces." He said that while the psyche is the source of healing, there is grave danger in coming face to face with the contents of the unconscious—therein lies terror, and perhaps madness. God would not allow his face to be revealed knowing that it would be too much for anyone to stand. The god of the Hebrew Bible is terrifying, violent and cruel, while at the same time this god is a force for good. But altogether he is too much of an overwhelming mixture for mere human discernment to manage.

An image of God is, as the Islamic world knows, a dangerous thing.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung said that "the meaning of divine service, of the service which man can render to God, that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself...If the Creator were conscious of Himself, He would not need conscious creatures;" (p338-9). Ah, then the symbiotic back and forth in the Hebrew Bible reflects this idea. But wait,

is it the case that as our consciousness changes, integrating more of what was hitherto part of the unconsciousness, such as shadow elements, so the unconscious must change as well?

Who am I?

God said; I am who I am. This, as Jung and others have said, is the real question—who is the real me, the authentic me? If I am who I am then the quest is to find answers. (I have to add that this is a ridiculously facile approach when I know I do not actually even understand the question).

Saying in the Bible that “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” may well be pointing to the fact that I cannot go looking outside of myself for an answer to this question (perhaps in the form of an addiction or a hero). What lies at the center of one is the Self and bringing my conscious self/ego into alignment is my task, and as difficult a one as this seems to be, it is not unlike the God of the Hebrew Bible. I know myself to be accepting and rejecting, disapproving and encouraging, creative and destructive, strategic and impulsive, vengeful and loving. Are these the “other gods” perhaps? Are these the good gods and the bad gods—neither to be rejected but rather to be integrated into a whole? Nothing stands in front of anything but together? The full catastrophe! (Zorba) And in the case of the 2nd commandment any craven images that I might project onto something or someone else, whether real or imagined, will not cut it.

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down...

Aaron dodges!

Split – culling and internal warfare

Lord: blot out of book! Then plague!

Then new tablets...

**CHARLES:**

Jung describes, “He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgment for his littleness has dawned. But the man who is inwardly great will know that the long expected friend of his soul, the immortal one, has now really come (to lead captivity captive Ephesians 4:8) that is to seize hold of him by whom this immortal had always been confined and held prisoner, and to make his life flow into that greater life—a moment of deadliest peril”

**MA:**

### Satan as a Collective Shadow

Seems to echo the scapegoat that was freed to roam around at will...and going back and forth. I am not suggesting that the scapegoat is the forerunner to Satan. I am suggesting that as the goat carried the dark side—the shadow side that the community did not want to own—so then Satan was brought forward later on to be a more powerful and active player in the unconscious world of the psyche where our shadow side may be very active not as an instinct as the goat represented (all that sexual and unclean behavior that was being cast out) but rather as a more human form for our collective projections (evil has many forms and may be represented for the convenience of some, by those who are different in our community, i.e. Asians, Africans etc.). The scapegoat as a forerunner to Lucifer, Satan, or the Devil may even appear in our dreams and certainly appears in our cultural fantasies. The shadow carries all those rejected thoughts; greed, violence, jealousy, temptations and all other aspects of our socially unacceptable potentialities. The shadow is a kind of an “innocent carrier” or “storage place” for us (individually or collectively)—unconsciously we create a shadow through repression and suppression of human tendencies; those that are considered inappropriate or unacceptable within a particular space and time. The Book of Leviticus outlines in detail the rituals and practices for the various offerings, the consecration of Aaron and his sons as the first priests, followed by God’s destruction of two of them for their offenses in carrying out the rituals. Next comes a full description of what it means to be unclean or to come into contact with unclean aspects (diseases, clothing, discharges etc.). By chapter 16 Atonement is the holiest section, with the directions on how the goat is chosen so as to carry the sins for the community and it is sent away as Azazel or the Wilderness-Demon. Finally the Book of Leviticus, with its mighty lists of prohibitions regarding food, sexual contacts, and what is to be punished and how, concludes with another set of commandments. (Who needs another set?)

Jung writes the following about the shadow:

*In contrast to the meditation found in yoga practice, the psychoanalytic aim is to observe the shadowy presentation—whether in the form of images or of feelings—that are spontaneously evolved in the unconscious psyche and appear without his bidding to the man who looks within. In this way we find once more things that we have repressed or forgotten. Painful though it may be, this is in itself a gain—for what is inferior or even worthless belongs to me as my Shadow and gives me substance and mass. How can I be substantial if I fail to cast a Shadow? I must have a*

*dark side also if I am to be whole; and inasmuch as I become conscious of my Shadow I also remember that I am a human being like any other.*<sup>222</sup>

### **Nested Symbolic Entities are Empty Internally**

Prior to the Babylonian Exile, Judaism had no heaven or hell—souls of the dead simply went to a place of rest, sheol, regardless of the life that had been led. There was no Satan; there were no angels. The notion of Satan entered Judaism during the Babylonian Exile, so no biblical book written before that time contains any reference to Satan. Chronicles was actually written during the Exile, as a revision to the Deuteronomic History, and thus is the first book in the Bible to contain the name Satan. 1 Chronicles 21:1: "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel."

Because Kings (part of the Deuteronomic history) was written before the Exile, the corresponding passage contains no mention of Satan. Another post-exilic reference to Satan is in the Book of Job, which introduces Satan, not yet as the adversary of God portrayed in later Christian belief, but as a “son of God” or angel, whose role was to prove the righteousness of people by tempting them to do wrong. God twice gave Satan a challenge to have Job curse God, first by destroying his family and his property (1:8,11), then by afflicting him with a terrible disease. If Job cursed God, he would be judged as evil.

Also: in the King James Version, Psalms 109:6 refers to Satan, but the Hebrew Masoretic text (in English translation) for Psalm 109:6 refers to an Adversary, rather than Satan.

Evil is mentioned much earlier—in Genesis.

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<sup>222</sup> Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 35.

## **The Book of Job; *Answer to Job***

We now come to the turning point in our mythic narrative. This book impacted Jung so much that he wrote the one volume he said he would not change a word of: *Answer to Job*. We will consider the book of Job from many angles, translating it and amplifying it as we have with the other texts. In this case, we will also be considering Jung's response as a kind of original text, like an important midrash in our tradition of psychological wrestling with the text, and I think you'll agree that it is as powerful and timely now as it was when he wrote it in 1952.

When the fabric of what you believe to be true comes apart (a "Jobian moment") you have an opportunity to change. One horrific example: after the Holocaust, new Jewish theologies emerged to take account of previously unimaginable levels of evil. Before this time, Jewish theology held that negative events for the Jews were caused by God, since he was all-powerful, and the reason for them was a lack of righteousness on the part of the people. Most of the prophets take this approach. However with Job, and of course with the Holocaust, that conception became emotionally untenable. For us, we are trying to get closer to an experience of the God-image that's in the midst of change—like something happening to our sense of "the whale" in our metaphor of the whale-rider.

In Job there is absolutely no justification for his suffering. He has done nothing wrong. This is like the situation of our patients in the hospital (in that sense, we're all Job). And yet we desperately look for a reason; we are so wedded to causation that we tend to find some moral lack in ourselves and try to make a reasonable causal argument from there.

But why wait for external events like hurricanes or pain and neurosis to try to change? We could instead listen to hints from the unconscious and take a proactive stance to change, that is, to keep it active and moving.

Much of this same material is found in the sutras, especially the Lankavatara Sutra. The sutras are, in general, much more psychological and in some ways complete descriptions of these psychic events than the Bible. But the Bible is more deeply ingrained in our culture; you'd have to do a lot more work to access the sutras.

Satan's big question, and really the central question for all of us, when translated, is: Does Job fear God for nothing? Yahweh's caught here—but what does this mean? This is the other side of ourselves—it is the rest of us, as Yahweh wondering, do you love me? Our psyche is asking “Do you love me?” This is the whale. Our fear of the other side (which has all the marbles and all of the power) keeps us away from it. It is truly dangerous and unpredictable, and demands things from us. This is why we're superstitious. Religion formed to corral this other side of us.

Yahweh did not indulge in any wondering about humanity in the past of the text. He declared a state of righteous or lack, and acted in accordance with that. We do see a potential for negotiation when Moses bargains for the people of Sodom, and this should be counted as a precursor to reflection. However, with Satan's help (and Satan's translation is “adversary”) he does. Job is the subject of this question for the very reason that he is blameless and upright. Psychologically, does this mean that something of the opposite is constellated? Is this the next step for all of us? He is not a man of the norm, he is not a sinner, and thus stands out. Is this a matter of “The nail that sticks up will be hammered down”? The collective becomes unstable when someone stands out. The

collective does not like an outlier. The collective responds badly to those who individuate unless we keep the fabric woven as we step out. To avoid this, we have to take responsibility for the hole we've left. Our increasing wholeness demands increasing compensation. Job is the most powerful in his group—but is this a random hateful occurrence? Is it a retribution? Or is it some kind of actual individuation? How we come to understand this will determine so much about the story and our own stance in the world.

In Buddhism a similar problem appears, but in a different way, since there is no provision for shadow within the concept of enlightenment. This means that all of the questions that Job brings up are not allowed.

Job, unlike Cain, went towards the source when all was taken away—"naked I came into the world, naked I will return." (4:8). And he invokes a karmic theory, "those who plow iniquity plow the same." He dives into the question of theodicy when he asks "Can mortals be righteous before God?" (4:17) And finally, he declares, in an experiential moment of great and despairing honesty, "I loathe my life." (9:21) He truly is the blameless and the righteous. In Chapter 14, he claims to understand impermanence, since "life flees like a shadow and does not last." Finally, in Chapter 38, his perseverance attains something because "then the lord answered out of the whirlwind." Yahweh is not sympathetic, however, and challenges him: "Where were you" when I created Leviathan?! But for the first time, there's a dialogue; God appears! He is scary and threatening, but present. Job's situation is like Indra's net. Job himself is a kind of koan—in the sense that it is a problem that is given to you from the other and which has only an experiential answer. The idea is that a situation comes and forces you to hold the tension

of opposites (whether thought of as justice and injustice or the righteousness of Job and God's arbitrariness) neither of which is soluble; this is the popping of a koan.

The indescribable thing that's messing with you—the fate quotation of Jung's could be a description of the book of Job:

*The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner opposite, the world must perforce act out the conflict and be torn into opposing halves.*<sup>223</sup>

Job says “No purpose of yours can be thwarted” —imagine saying that to your psyche! The only sin apparent here is the (original) sin of not already understanding our wholeness so that when you get a glimpse of it you might be ready to repent that stance. Here, when Job sees God, his view of the world is shattered (42:5).

We know Yahweh needs praise, and we should remember that when we consider the whale model of the psyche. Do we make an opening for understanding? The unconscious mind sees clearly, in the sense that it is the arbiter of adaptation. In the unconscious is everything that has been rejected by consciousness—from the shadow to the healing properties.

One problem with the traditional, *privatio boni* view is that if God is seen as all good, then mankind has to carry the dark side. On the other hand, if the opposites are held, then something can come to our aid from the depths of our unconscious. Our task is to divide and hold the division. This indicates that a new god-image is emerging, and this emergence is typically deeply unsettling and powerful.

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<sup>223</sup>Jung, *Aion*, vol. 9, *CW*.



Remember that Jung is not just talking theology—he means these things as aspects of ourselves! This study of Job, even with our long and unintended break, is a continuation of a theme. At the retreat, we considered the relationship between “Sin, Karma and Atonement” and of course I had to add sacrifice and joy. Even so we are just barely scratching the surface, as we also strive to dive deeply into ourselves on behalf of our patients.

There is a similar question in Buddhism, at least in Dogen’s zen. This question has been around since the time of Hui-neng, a fellow barbarian outsider, and has to do with conceptions of spiritual transformation and the relationship between the human and divine, or enlightened and unenlightened, states. In Dogen’s language, the question was: If we are originally (foundationally) enlightened, why do we “practice?” What are we practicing? Is practice a manifestation of what is already there?

We consider the degree to which our own power (as people and a society) demands of us our responsibility. Each of us. Personally. So, powerlessness is connected to ignorance.

As we discussed previously, traditional Jewish theology developed a perspective that saw the Jews’ own faults as the cause of all the major problems in the world, with the problems being God’s retribution for those faults. Otherwise, God was emasculated, or in some way not omnipotent. There is a line (actually two) in new-age reasoning that is similar. To amplify developmentally, young children cannot blame the parents for bad parenting because the parental archetypes are still wholly identified with the persons of the parents, and we will wither and die without a functioning archetypal channel. So children cannot risk their own connection to the divine and have to blame

themselves...this is also one use of karma, to make everything bad that happens one's own fault, to maintain an image of cosmic justice. It should be noted that a healthy version of this is when children imagine that their parents are not their real parents, but they come from a kingdom "over there"—which is true archetypally, but is only possible if there has been sufficient support to imagine outside the box of the literal parents.

Speaking of karma, it is a deep and profound concept if fully entered...but can be used for any purpose. Mostly I hear it as a justification for something (often morality). This is usually not well thought out as a concept and becomes a "making shallow." Also, the Buddhist cause-and-effect position is both phenomenologically naïve as well as typically used for rank moralizing. Rather, it is the state of mind of the questioner, and the way questions are asked, that are the keys to a deep understanding. This is what I challenge the Buddhist community, and all of you as part of it, to do: to allow these concepts to open up inquiry into being, rather than "be answers," a stance that closes down the horizons of our understanding

If there is a problem with Eastern ideas, it is not so much that they are complicated or mystical (they surely are neither—or no more so than Job, which is plenty complicated and mystical), but rather that we did not grow up with them, so supplying them with the same depth of association and feeling is a huge amount of work. Whereas these biblical stories are kind of embedded in us and so can potentially have a huge impact. Having said that, I'd like to contradict myself again (invoking that pesky multivalent psyche) since I do think, after thirty or so years with both, that (selected parts of) the sutras are more nuanced psychologically and might even benefit from the lack of cultural baggage.

The question of love or, as The Adversary says (by the way, he is the most important character in the development of our consciousness), “Does Job fear God for nothing?” precipitates the doubt that allows God to order the conditions for Job’s suffering. This can be translated as the beginning of our own questioning process (like the child’s confidence to imagine other others!). In interrogating God, we risk our survival and creep towards a glimpse of ... something.

Crucially, God instructs Satan to do what he wishes to all that Job possesses materially, but to “not lay a hand on his person” (1:12). Likewise, when Job, after enduring the catastrophic destruction of his servants, family, and material possessions, still responds by proclaiming his allegiance to God, Satan is allowed to test him a second time, with even greater devastation to his individual being. Again, God tells Satan to leave alone some important element of Job: “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life” (2:6). Deus Absconditus indeed.

As Ben (in class) mentioned, the question is one of “becoming other, to ourselves.” As mentioned previously, the change in attitude toward the God-image is shown in that, unlike Cain, Job goes toward the perceived source of the problem, not away. Like the cook in Koshin’s story about the snake head in the monastery soup, Job eats the head of the snake. But he not only eats it, he challenges Yahweh through it.

Jung, after developing his understanding of the God-image and its meaning in psychology, felt he had to tackle the problem of psychological theodicy. That is, we assume that “becoming ourselves,” and similar tropes, are always going to lead to pleasant experiences and the development of a personality that is socially accepted and even approved. However, we run across logical and experiential problems here—partly

with examples of Zen masters who are drunks (and so on), and partly with the personal experience of truthfulness leading to an injury of a parental idealization or even an injury to a relationship. Jung writes,

His (Yahweh's) incalculable moods and devastating attacks of wrath had, however, been known from time immemorial. (think of it as unexplained moodiness as well as anger). He had proved to himself to be a jealous defender of morality and was especially sensitive in regard to justice. Hence he had always to be praised as "just" which, it seemed, was very important to him.<sup>224</sup>

Jung saw that these attributes meant that this form of "absolute" was very particular! What might that mean either culturally or personally, or if encountered in chaplaincy?

Jung continues:

Thanks to this circumstance or peculiarity of his he had a distinct personality, which differed from that of a more or less archaic king (showing that the dominant of an unexamined psyche looks like a king) only in scope. His jealous and irritable nature, prying mistrustfully into the faithless hearts of men and exploring their secret thoughts, compelled a personal relationship between himself and man who could not help but feel personally called by him.<sup>225</sup>

The transformation Yahweh experiences is one of self-awareness that leads to the desire to become man. "To sum up: the immediate cause of the Incarnation lies in Job's elevation, and its purpose is the differentiation of Yahweh's consciousness. For this a situation of extreme gravity was needed...without which no higher level of consciousness can be reached."<sup>226</sup> Jung is here referring to Christ, which he sees as the next step of the "Incarnation," and the advent is caused by Job's elevation. So we can see one of the benefits of increased consciousness: crucifixion.

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<sup>224</sup> C. G. Jung, *Answer to Job*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

This crucifixion shows another way that images from the Old Testament will find a symbolic kind of fruition in the Gospels, and also show that a new model of holding the tension of opposites is developing in the figure of Job:

Job realizes god's inner antinomy and in the light of this realization his knowledge attains a divine numinosity. The possibility of this development lies, one must suppose in man's 'godlikeness' which one should certainly not look for in human morphology."<sup>227</sup>

“Yahweh needs praise.” Again and again we come upon this statement, and apart from a kind of social cohesion, what does it mean to praise the total and mostly unconscious psyche?

Because of his littleness, and defenselessness against the Almighty, he possesses, as we have already suggested, a somewhat keener consciousness based on self-reflection: he must, in order to survive, always be mindful of his impotence. God has no need of this circumspection, nowhere does he come up against an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence make him reflect on himself.<sup>228</sup>

This statement shows why Jung says, somewhat maddeningly, that the self (referring of course to the big self) is what crosses my will. That puts all of our “troubles” in a new light indeed. However Jung claims that “The unconscious mind of man sees correctly even when the conscious reason is blind and impotent. The drama has been consummated for all eternity. Yahweh's dual nature has been revealed, and somebody or something has seen and registered this fact. Such a revelation, whether it reached man's consciousness or not, could not fail to have far-reaching consequences.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Jung, *Answer to Job*, 23.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>229</sup> Jung, *Answer to Job*, 37.

Finally we get to Job's reward, and we have to wonder what the correlate is for us or our patients: "Behold Behemoth, which I made as I made you. He is the first of the works of God, made to be lord over his companions." Job 40:14-19

Here are some key phrases and ideas from Jung, in *Answer to Job*, which we can discuss in light of Job as well as our own experience and that of our patients. There is a conception that builds throughout his argument, and let's see how it lands in the end.

Jung writes that "in the unconscious is everything that has been rejected by conscious, and the more Christian (and I might suggest we add "the more Buddhist") ones consciousness is, the more heathen-like does the unconscious behave, if in the rejected heathenism there are values which are important for life."<sup>230</sup> So you can run, but you cannot hide, and in fact the heightened appreciation of the good side merely forces the negative qualities to come out at the unseen level.

Next we find a consideration of redaction criticism, which simply states that that which is left in the text that does not correspond to current theology (that is, self-concept), is more likely to be genuine than that which obviously supports a later theological agenda. This is an important consideration for any text, and becomes a powerful tool for self-inquiry: What if we remember only that which serves our current self-conception? Most of the current neurological studies support exactly this idea of the function of memory, and yet our common conception is of memory as a neutral recording of events.

Jung concludes with a particularly dark observation, "As a totality, the self is by definition always a *complexio oppositorum*...and the more consciousness insists on its

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 78.

own luminous nature and lays claim to moral authority, more the self will appear as dark and menacing.”

What if we extend this observation to hero worship in general and the idea of cultural ideals? Jung finds that “the imitation of Christ (and again I would add ‘or Bodhisattva’)

creates a corresponding shadow in the unconscious.” We become “forced to follow in the footsteps of the young dying god” who never become complete human beings, since completeness is the opponent of perfection.

This brings us to a consideration of ourselves as other, and whether we love or fear that other. Much hinges on this, since the definition of “neighbor” and the question of “evil” and outsider are based, psychologically, on whether we can confront and integrate those dark and dangerous aspects of ourselves. So this investigation must ask: What about other people? What about our conception of the numinous? Finally, what about our conception of fate, since as Jung mentions, the truly neurotic are those without amor fati.

On the other hand, the quality of the God-image that stands out is its numinosity. But anything that is experienced as numinous is difficult to handle intellectually, since our feelings are deeply involved. There is no reflective stance here but only total involvement, that is, “One always participates for or against” it.

We can try to be agnostic, but this overlooks the fact that “one never possesses a metaphysical belief but is possessed by it,” and yet both are dominated by the apparent supremacy of reason, hence the occasional stupidity of really smart people like Dawkins, who fails to see that something as deeply powerful as religion has meaning merely due to its power, as well as the fact that almost nothing of importance in human life is decided by the rational functions of the mind.

Jung reminds us that this is part of the nature of consciousness which “knows only this or that...so must wait for an irrational response” to solve any problem of relationship. And so we come to 738: “The paradoxical nature of god has like effect on man: it tears him asunder into opposites and delivers him over to a seemingly insoluble conflict.”

What happens in such a condition? The alchemists thought of the philosopher’s stone as a parallel to Christ, and we see the same events from within ourselves as modern persons, when a vision of some totality brings together light and dark. This problem for the modern persona “is no longer projected upon matter... (as for the alchemists) but is now found in psyche.” But that is in itself demands religious understanding, since we are back to the claim that we cannot move consciousness forward without withdrawing projections upon the metaphysical, and so we are forced back upon ourselves.

Symbols do show up here and there in dreams, but more importantly, in certain dynamics, like child-hero, squaring of circle—or we can look in fairy tales and alchemy. But we have to look for modern variants. And the symbol only means the beginning of the possibility. Then the work begins, since “Psychologically the God-concept includes every idea of the ultimate, of the first or last, of the highest or lowest. The name makes no difference.” Jung sees that God wants to become embodied, and still wants to—meaning that the dominant of our psyche wants to be known and lived.

However there is a nasty paradox, because (if the) “Fear of God is too great to place the antinomy in god... then man carries the dark side of god.”

The growth of the sciences in particular (which were originally taught by the fallen angels as lightbringers) contaminates us and makes us less vulnerable to the pull of



sainthood (although chaplaincy still qualifies as a good attempt) and the terrible reversal that this attitude sets us up for. However as we become more open to the unconscious, we need the solidity of the Christian and Buddhist virtues to keep us grounded. This is because of the nature of wisdom, which as Jung mentions, “The higher or complete (telios) person is begotten by the unknown father and born from wisdom.”

Science is a result of the deep differentiation of conscious and unconscious aspects, and provides tremendous leverage and power with regard to the physical world. It is this very light that becomes demonic, and this very power, that like Job, begins to demand another level of understanding. “Everything depends on man...He needs the help of an ‘advocate’ in heaven.” But for us who is this advocate?

Whatever man’s wholeness or the self, may mean per se, empirically it is an image of the goal of life spontaneously produced by the unconscious, irrespective of the wishes and fears of the conscious mind. It stands for the goal of the total man, for the realization of his wholeness and individuality with or without the consent of his will. The dynamic of this process is instinct, which ensures that everything which belongs to an individual’s life shall enter into it, whether he consents or not, or is conscious of what is happening to him or not.<sup>231</sup>

It makes a big difference if we are conscious of this process or not! The former carries responsibility, the latter does not. Let’s remember the apocryphal saying of Christ already quoted: “Man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed: but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed and a transgressor of the law.” (Codex Bezae, insertion at Luke 6:4)

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<sup>231</sup> Jung, *Answer to Job*, 93.

This problem appears insoluble, and to the conscious mind, it is. The unconscious sees it as a confrontation of opposites that can be reconciled, although that does not mean rationally solved. If the opposites are held, which is not to say resolved, something can

...come to our aid from the depths of our unconscious nature. It is the task of the conscious mind to understand these hints. If this does not happen, the process of individuation will nevertheless continue. The only difference is that we become its victims and are dragged along by fate towards that inescapable goal which we might have reached walking upright, if only we had taken the trouble and been patient enough to understand in time the meaning of the numina that cross our path.<sup>232</sup>

If consciousness does become involved in this process, then at the end of the process there is no understanding. It is consciousness which is both the problem and the solution—and it is what becomes improved and expanded by the struggle. We can certainly wonder in all of this where is the location of the agency. Is it in the archetypal realm (which it seems to be in Job) or in the conscious will? Unfortunately we cannot tell, since direct investigation of internal matters can only be done by the subject! So:

We concede to the archetype a definite measure of independence, and to consciousness a degree of creative freedom proportionate to its scope...there then arises that reciprocal action between two relatively autonomous factors which compels us, when describing and explaining the processes to present sometimes the one and sometimes the other factor as the acting subject, even when god becomes man.

After all, “Even the enlightened person . . . is never more than his own limited ego before the One who dwells within him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who

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<sup>232</sup> Jung, *Answer to Job*.

encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky.”<sup>233</sup>

The problems we encounter are not a surprise—the first is ignorance. However the second is aversion—and that’s the good news! The reason is because if there is truly only ignorance then nothing ‘crosses over’ from the unconscious, that is, it remains an unknown. We need that which crosses over in slime and filth (as well as in joy and desire) to orient us to the Other of all others.

And so we come to Jung’s beautiful conclusion:

The guilty man is eminently suitable and is therefore chosen to become the vessel for the continuing incarnation, not the guiltless one who holds aloof from the world and refuses to pay his tribute to life, for in him the dark God would find no room.

### **Student Reflections:**

#### **JOB**

MA:

Relationship between ‘man’ & God in Job

Is seen as an extended poem about God changing relationship with the people in the Old Testament

The friends assume that God rewards good and punishes evil—but God of the old testament is both good and evil as the book of Genesis and Exodus have revealed. Here are some points as the relationship evolves throughout the Book of Job:

1. Job suffers as a victim of a wager between God and Satan
2. The fact that his suffering is basically irrelevant in the greater scheme of things. God does not show concern for Job apart from the guidelines given to Satan to not kill Job—why? God needs to have his servant alive and completely open to God’s power. This brief statement skirts around a deeper discussion that could become an essay thesis perhaps.

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<sup>233</sup> Jung, *Answer to Job*, 97.

3. The theological discussion between the friends and Job which is basically that God rewards good and punishes evil vs. Job's realization that our suffering does not matter to God (further to point 2)
4. Job proves to have greater self-awareness than God (this requires greater discussion)
5. Satan seems more conscious of his motives than God of his motives, who acts on a whim—there seems to be no self-reflection in speech or actions (there is clear textual evidence here showing us the purpose underlying the encounter between Job and God and is fascinating and it too needs greater elaboration)
6. Job seems to “get this” when he puts his hand over his mouth—he seems to be holding back his new understanding about who God really is.

Who is God in Job?

Seems to represent a change in the relationship between the people and their understanding of God—this paves the way for a different relationship, as there is an expressed need, born of existential angst, for the archetypal god to be transformed into something both more remote (a God of pure good) and more approachable (though the mediation of a son of god that is born of woman (Holy Mary mother of God) and is both god and man in one (Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6).

### **Some Psychological Reflections on Joseph**

This is the longest single narrative in the Bible. We can see, among other things, that direct contact with God is receding, as typically happens in psychological maturity, when projections become retracted. As Jung mentioned above, we cannot maintain non-psychological projections about non-empirical subjects. Of course the trickster wants to point out that he said nothing about good old psychological projections.

**JM:**

Joseph's tale interests me because it is different from what we've read before in Genesis; in this story, God takes a minimal role. (He is neither the commanding, disembodied voice nor the human-like form who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden.) God feels “off stage” in a sense. He is only there to favor Joseph and to help to get him out of a tight spot. This is

the first story we've read so far that has such a lengthy narrative with many twists and turns.

#### Build-up/Circumstances

Time and again, Joseph rises above his circumstances to triumph. He is placed in situations where we think he cannot escape. There is a kind of "forgetting" that swirls around Joseph; he is tossed into the well to languish, but suddenly a brother has second thoughts and they pull him out. He is then forgotten again in prison, but the cupbearer remembers him and he is fetched from jail to interpret the pharaoh's dreams. Timing is crucial in this story. The other characters have confusion about what to do (notice how the other dream interpreters do not have a clue what the pharaoh's rather straightforward dreams could possibly mean, for example) while Joseph is sure and correct in his predictions. It is interesting to note that the pharaoh's dreams get described twice in the narrative—is that significant? At one point he says "in my dream" and then "in my dreams" when recounting the second one. I do not know if that is significant or not.

#### What is the big moment? / Crisis

I am struggling to come up with one big moment because there seem to be several, and I am wondering if that's somehow significant to the overall message in the story. Joseph being tossed down into the cistern is one of those moments, as well as his being sold into slavery and then thrown into prison in Egypt. If I had to choose one, it would be when Joseph is brought before the Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. Joseph performs admirably and is rewarded accordingly. What I find interesting about this is that leading up this point there has been a kind of confusion around Joseph (induced by God?) that allows him to escape from his troubles.

Although it is not in the section I am writing on, the bigger moment is when Joseph reveals his true identity to his brothers. There's an aspect of the story being recreated again in a shorthand version: the youngest son (Benjamin) is brought before Joseph; the brothers are thrown in prison to experience what Joseph felt. There is a reenactment of what happened—a replaying of the trauma.

#### Amplification

Joseph's tale reminds me of the monk who, when falsely accused of impregnating a beautiful girl in the village, answered "Is that so?" He lost his temple, his reputation, and was cast out. He was even forced to raise the child. Finally, the daughter confessed that she had falsely accused the monk. The story is about the monk's acceptance of the situation and not getting stuck in the perceived fairness of it all. There's something in

Joseph's story of being accused and the brothers being caught in the end that parallel this story, though in the monk's case the woman confesses of her own volition rather than being exposed.

#### My own experience

I am not sure why I am drawn to the story of the cupbearer and the baker. Traditionally, this story was explained as showing how a petulant, spoiled Joseph came to find favor and trust in the Lord. I do not remember the part about the cupbearer and the baker from my childhood. But now I am curious about it. Why is the cupbearer spared? And how can Joseph so cruelly and coolly relay the baker's fate to him? It does not say he had any feelings around what must have been terrifying news for the baker. I have read that the cupbearer traditionally serves drinks to the royal court and was used as a "tester" to make sure that nothing had been poisoned. Why was he spared and not the baker?

#### Clinical observations

This story reminds me of patients on the psych floor I used to visit. It is a locked floor and most of them have been put in the hospital by someone else and do not want to be there. They feel unjustly accused. Like Joseph, some of them are able to interpret the world and will tell you "how things are." Unlike Joseph, their interpretations (often paranoid or delusional) are not applauded as being accurate and helpful. They are still languishing in the cistern or in prison and no one is suddenly around them to pull them from their plight and reward them.

### **Psychological Reflections on Joseph**

Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. For all of these reasons, Joseph was hated. What are the elements of the psyche that these qualities refer to? Remember to try to think of all of it as an internal dynamic—that is, what psychic state is it to be the "son of his old age?"

And what is the grounding for his tattletale nature? And more troubling, how might all of that be necessary for the development of the story?

He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed , behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round it, and bowed down to my sheaf."

Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said,

"Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ...They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

We see an obvious immaturity and lack of judgment, but perhaps this is where we all start, like Parsifal in the Grail legend. And here is a part near to my heart since it is the beginning of biblical dream interpretation. Of course Joseph makes a mess of it here even by telling his dreams because of the usual human propensity to be concrete about the meanings of spiritual understanding. So at the very least, that part needs to be changed and change in its most harsh form is death.

This narrative also takes us again to Egypt, which plays a very particular role throughout the entire scope of the Bible. Egypt is commonly thought of as the bad place, and yet its actual function is as a kind of mother—it saves the Israelites again and again, nurtures and sustains them until they need to leave. Then it typically holds on, again just like the negative mother complex.

The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, 3 and his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.

Interesting that even though he was being such a schmuck Joseph had the Lord with him, so we have to wonder what that looked like. It led to prison, through the feminine of course, since eros is that which grounds us and shows us our constraints as well as breaking through the old ones.

What is prison? It is limited, restrictive. Underground. Not of your choice. The collective puts you there due to some transgression against the collective. This is the role of the brothers. It is non-voluntary, which is the self-dynamic as a call. Remember that a prison and monastic cell are very much the same in terms of function, the only question is the psychologically slippery one of will. I have found that a prison dream comes up at the beginning of the realization of who one is and that it is not our choice. Paths, after all, are constrained—they have edges, there are parts off limits, and they have directionality. Knowing your way and being constrained are one and the same thing. Also, prison is that image that appears when a psychological process has taken hold. Again, it is the experience of one's constraints as binding rather than as guiding. When things do not go well with the collective then we put ourselves into isolation/introspection/investigation. "Nobody likes this, I am alone with it." This is the attitude of being forced into reflection that is, being imprisoned, perhaps by realizing that certain idealizations and aspirations are not going to appear in the concrete world.

First he is thrown into prison, and then he makes relationships, and then he differentiates between them: "you'll be hung," "you'll be free, do not forget me." That is,



he was relating to them according to who they were. This is as opposed to earlier interaction with his brothers in which all brothers are treated the same.

We could also see this as the development of discipline. It is like one says to oneself, “I am going to make an effort to not do that.”

Now we come to an important symbol, Pharaoh. He is the dominant principle of the land, just like the dominant aspect of the psyche. He is the one with power. He was also a symbol of God to the Egyptians. This function is that inner aspect of the one who rules, the one who controls. This controlling principle also becomes a kind of oppression to the people of Israel. They are required to leave; we must wonder where we have had to leave our land and come under the control of another.

One part of the technique is to link functionally what happens before with what happens afterward—that is, there is a strange psychological causality that is completely different from any kind of Aristotelian, scientific, or moralistic causality. In this story he is thrown into the well, which seems bad, but what if that is a structural part of getting out? We have to ask, what happens before and is actually a part of what happens after? This very much changes how we hear people’s personal narratives.

Assignment: When people leave their “homeland” they encounter the Pharaoh. Who is Pharaoh for each of them? Ground Pharaoh in your own experience. Do this as well for plagues and for slavery. Be psychological. See it as your own process...a play unfolding within.

Think about these psychological aspects functionally. What happens when I get thrown into a dark, confined space? Fear, panic, hopelessness. Trapped. Or what if I

decide to enter of my own will, or due to a call? It is a very different experience of the same thing.

Pharaoh...the Ego? It ignores the call of God/Self and thus suffers.

Remember that we are not treating any of this material as though it is to be believed. This attitude will be easy for some and hard for others, especially if it seems like it is either absurd or obviously an aspect of reality. What makes this task difficult is that much of this material is so close to us—often embedded in our backgrounds.

Treating it like we would any other text is therefore that much more difficult. Try to think of it as a document of poetic archeology, as a record of the development of our psychic structure, one that has shaped our deepest personal and collective selves.

## **A REFLECTION ON ECCLESIASTES**

**CK**

### **Ecclesiastes**

According to James Kugel, author of *How to Read the Bible*, Ecclesiastes is one of three books of the Hebrew Bible that come under the rubric of 'wisdom writings' or the writings of Israel's sages (a distinct genre of writers). here is a load of controversy about the actual author that I am ignoring here only to say that he was a more "down to earth" example of the wisdom writers "lofty ideals" (p.511) So that "Orthodox wisdom sees virtues and vices, people getting ahead by dint of hard effort and modest self-restraint," ....Ecclesiastes sees only futility—or as his book's opening words are sometimes translated, "vanity of vanities."

Briefly comparing aspects of The Book of Job with aspects of Ecclesiastes, they are from a similar tradition, as both belong to the school of the "Wisdom Writings," both evoked a measure of controversy (and it may be that they still do), within those who are interested in the messages that are permissible in the Jewish tradition. It would seem that both these texts have a sense of challenge to the orthodoxy, though both texts are resolved in the end. Job went dangerously close to revealing Yahweh's shortcomings outright, though he places his hand over his mouth in the nick of time, while Eccles appears to be metaphorically throwing both hands in the air and telling us to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die...regardless of how we might choose to live. Eccles at first reading

seems to be rather cynical as to the treatment of the righteous and the wicked—it comes to naught it seems and justice does not rule, and, we may never know the reason why. In short, we do not matter to Yahweh! Isn't some of this sense also coming across in Job, especially as we as readers (or listeners) are entertained by the horse-trading over the testing of Job that was conducted between Yahweh and the 'adversary' (Satan)? The difference is that there is only one voice in Eccles. and certainly the voice of Yahweh is not heard.

Or is it.

“...Should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor.” (2:24). Are these just confusing, oblique and aimless expressions to bring to the forefront of a readers mind that indeed all is vanity? What I think it is providing is a tirade against the unquenchable desire (or more forcefully need) of the individual ego for certainty. Here every certainty is being debunked. There is no justice—all will perish in the end and it matters not very much what you do, it will still happen.

Vanity is such a good word! And related to the 4th Commandment...and the question of 'justice' is indeed what Job wrestled with.

Eccles repeatedly underscores the uncertainty of a single human life against the whims of history and chance and that it is nothing to Yahweh. The archetype does not give a fig what you are, who you are, what happens to you, how hard you work, how righteous you are and even how rich or poor. These things that have great importance for us as mere mortals, warrant not a second glance from the archetype. So then as a reader am I being given free rein to do whatever I choose? Ahh but the text says, that even this thought is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Until, that is, Chapter 7. Here the writer begins to look closely at the consequences of being one-sided while ignoring who one truly is, allowing for the “whole self,” including aspects of both righteousness and evil: “Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: Why shouldest thou destroy thyself?” (12:16). But Eccles emphasizes “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (12:20) and by the way do not go all the way over to the other side and decide to become “all wicked,” as that too is dangerous and unbalanced. So if “all is vanity” why then is there this plea here?

Could it be that Eccles may be alluding to what is today known as the psychological concept of inflation? Humans may cling to the idea that by living in a righteous way, according to religious law, that this will stave off evil and bad luck and further that by our very seeking, knowing and understanding we are in danger of going beyond the fear of God and then we fail to understand our place in the scheme of things. Eccles is warning

that things can and will be broken and that after all it is hopeless to think that we might influence outcomes: “Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets” (12:5), all the praying and wailing cannot change that. It is narcissistic and futile. Jung says that an inflation, is always threatened with a counter-stroke from the unconscious, and there is a hint of this in 8:16 as Eccles appears to be speaking about the unconscious self—“for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes.” And then again in 8:17, “Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.” In short, we simply do not know. Eccles concludes saying okay life is full of surprises and we humans control almost nothing in the whole scheme of things—least of all our destiny, go ahead and live your lives but in the end remember: God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (12:14).

Perhaps what Hamlet’s Polonius said would be fitting here—“To thine own self be true.” More fitting yet would be Jung’s statement: “Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.”

Eccles is trying to stampede his readers away from the inflationary idea that we think we know and can control everything in our lives, but this is folly and vain and we need to take stock of the world and our place in it—“All things come alike to all.” (9:2)

## **STUDENT REFLECTIONS:**

### **BK**

These books seem greatly relevant to our chaplaincy work. The Song of Solomon is a joy to read, and also evokes the freedom that comes with praising—with celebration and affirmation, rather than negation and judgment. Ecclesiastes, though certainly more somber, also has passages of affirmation, despite its consistent return to the central and inescapable fact of death. It is look at days gone past reminds me of Murphy, a patient I had recently who had difficulty with memories of a woman he loved. The woman had died 12 years earlier, and Murphy was struggling with depression, anxiety, and loneliness since her passing. In such a situation, I listened, and felt my heart return to the pain that I also have felt in feeling left behind by someone I loved. Though I do not think I would proffer a biblical passage to someone like Murphy, I nevertheless feel that the books offer a deep background of empathy in chaplaincy work, as they provide access to universal human situations.

With these books, I am reminded of Rilke’s deep considerations of death, the knowledge of which, for him, has the power to enhance our

relationship to life. He wrote, “There is no task as urgent for us as to learn daily how to die, but our knowledge of death is not increased by renunciation of life; only the ripe fruit of the here and now that has been seized and bitten into will spread its indescribable taste in us.” In Ecclesiastes, and certainly with Song of Solomon, there is just this intention of enhanced relationship to life. And such an intention comes to fruition, it seems, only with this continuously renewed entrance into death.

It should be noted that there were a few classes devoted to New Testament symbolism, and the material was available as a set of topics for final papers. However the tenor of the class had changed enough so that all present decided a full course devoted to the New Testament themes and particulars would be needed to do justice to the depth of the material. A large part of the discussion revolved around the figure of Jesus as a semi-historical figure as well as a heroic figure, very much like the Buddha, so that much of what looks like personal detail is in fact mythic accretion common to all heroic and soteriological figures.

The other theme of great interest was the obvious mis-reading of the Torah to apply to the now-deceased Jesus in retrospect. Many of the modern theories were considered in terms of an explanation, but the focus remained on the Jungian idea that something had changed in the unconscious salience of the population that, like a dam bursting, was going to find the most efficient ravine and exploit it with the full force of a civilization in the midst of the transformation of its God-image.

### **Student Reflections:**

**LUKE:**

**DO:**

From clinical work: A family friend called me recently to consult about an elderly married couple. He, the husband and his wife’s primary caregiver, is healthy and in his eighties. His wife had a series of strokes that left her without speech or mobility and almost completely non-communicative. The friend and family were concerned about the husband’s continuing efforts to maintain their regular patterns of non-essential medical treatments and Florida trips in the winter. They believed that all the husband was doing for her was difficult at best and torturous at worst. Some family felt strongly that the husband needed to face the “truth” of the situation. They were thinking about a strong intervention. I came to understand that the husband maintained his sense of relatedness to his wife through these routines. After listening further with the family we arrived at a plan for a light intervention that would allow the husband to continue in his care-giving role, would set aside some of the unnecessary medical

procedures, but wouldn't require confronting him with the "truth" of his wife decline.

At the end of the parable of the Crafty Steward, there is a return of the steward, the worldly creative aspect, to the master, the ruling principle. Both aspects are changed in the process of this inner confrontation. The gnosis moment is the recognition of wisdom by the ruling principle. The worldly aspect returns commended for wisdom and here is a shift in the dominant away from the rules and regulations imposed from the outside; and a movement towards a creative set of values worked out in the world and based on self-knowledge. I'll close the paper with this from Sanford's *The Kingdom Within* (1987, p35). Also the conclusion is key: the recognition of two worlds, with different rules.

"The higher morality requires confronting the shadowy one within us who has made the rules necessary in the first place. In this way we achieve a truly differentiated moral attitude toward ourselves and life and are fit for the creative life of the kingdom within."

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